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# Immigrants Facing Immigration Policy: State Laws Regulating Eligibility For In-State Tuition And Belonging Among Immigrant Youth In The United States

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IMMIGRANTS FACING IMMIGRATION POLICY:  
STATE LAWS REGULATING ELIGIBILITY FOR IN-STATE TUITION AND  
BELONGING AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES

by

FANNY LAUBY

A dissertation  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

To the Graduate Faculty in Political Science  
**The City University of New York**

&

To the Graduate Faculty in American Studies  
**Université Sorbonne Nouvelle of Paris**

2014

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## APPROVAL PAGE

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the  
Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the  
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## ABSTRACT

Immigrants Facing Immigration Policy:  
State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and  
Belonging among Immigrant Youth in the United States

by FANNY LAUBY

**Advisors:** Dr. John H. Mollenkopf (City University of New York Graduate Center)  
Dr. Martine Azuelos (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris III)

This dissertation focuses on new paths of immigrant incorporation and on the political mobilization of undocumented youths in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area. The goal of this investigation is to assess whether contrasting state laws that either open or restrict eligibility for in-state tuition are associated with different levels of belonging and different styles of organizing among immigrant youths. This research draws from theories on political incorporation and a resource mobilization model of collective action. It also builds on theories of policy design highlighting the role of policy images in immigration reform. This dissertation aims to develop a broader understanding of the subjective sense of belonging, which includes civic and political engagement along with various measures of assimilation.

The contrasting cases of state-level policy in New York and New Jersey provide for an investigation into an important level of government that has largely been missing from the debate on comprehensive immigration reform. Both states have considered legislation in 2012 and 2013 which would grant larger access to public universities for undocumented youths. To fully address this issue, the dissertation relies on an innovative mixed-methods approach,

collecting both quantitative data from a survey of college-age Latino immigrants, and qualitative data from sixty in-depth interviews with undocumented youths.

Results indicate that undocumented youths tend to become mobilized in states which provide more restrictive contexts of reception, and where the coalition of support is still being recruited. However, state laws affecting access to college do shape the availability of political and civic resources for immigrant youths. This is evident both when the law opens and restricts eligibility for in-state tuition. This dissertation highlights the importance of place in immigrants' paths of political incorporation into the United States, as well as the role of policy narratives in fostering or deterring political engagement. The results will help policymakers better understand the contexts of reception which public policies create for young immigrants.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CUNY – City University of New York

DACA – Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

DHS – Department of Homeland Security

DREAM (Act) – Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act

GAO – United States Government Accountability Office

ICE – Immigration and Customs Enforcement

IIRIRA – Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act

IRCA – Immigration Reform and Control Act

LPR – Legal Permanent Resident

NCSL – National Conference of State Legislatures

NJ – New Jersey

NJDAC – New Jersey Dream Act Coalition

NY – New York

NYSYLC – New York State Youth Leadership Council

PRWORA – Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act

RPI – Registered Provisional Immigrant

SUNY – State University of New York

USCIS – United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

UWD – United We Dream

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Substantive focus**

#### *State laws relative to immigration and immigrants*

The goal of this research project is to study whether the adoption of state laws providing access to in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants has influenced this group's sense of belonging in the United States. The project develops a comprehensive understanding of belonging, drawing on assimilation measures, belonging measures, and levels of civic engagement and political participation.

Since the 1990s, states have been increasingly active in the domain of immigrant-related legislation (Filindra and Kovács, 2012; Newton and Adams, 2009). As regulating immigration is a federal responsibility, the Constitution and various Supreme Court decisions limit the type of legislation that states can enact. Most state laws deal with drivers' licenses, identification requirements, and access to benefits for immigrants living within their jurisdiction. One specific group – undocumented immigrants – has been particularly targeted by states seeking to cut costs at a time when the undocumented population in the United States was soaring (Massey and Pren, 2012). In particular, their access to in-state tuition and state financial aid in higher education has been the source of many debates across the states. Since 2001, fifteen states have adopted laws which allow some undocumented youths to qualify for in-state tuition in the state's public institutions of higher education (NCSL, 2014). So far, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Washington have all allowed undocumented

students to qualify for in-state tuition if they meet certain requirements, including having graduated from a high school in the state and having resided there for a period of time ranging from one to four years. In addition, in four states – Oklahoma, Hawaii, Michigan and Rhode Island – Boards of Regents are providing in-state tuition to some undocumented youths in lieu of legislative action (NCSL, 2014).

Other states have chosen the opposite route by explicitly restricting in-state tuition and other higher education benefits to citizens and legal permanent residents. Some have even barred undocumented students from registering in public institutions of higher education. States like Arizona (2006), Georgia (2008) and Indiana (2011) have barred undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition or any state financial aid. Others like South Carolina (2008) and Alabama (2011) have adopted laws which prevent undocumented students from registering in public institutions of higher education. North Carolina has changed its policy regarding undocumented students multiple times over the past decade (Marrow, 2009). After banning them from enrolling, the state allowed each institution to create their own policy regarding undocumented students. Finally in 2009, the state allowed undocumented students to enroll at in-state tuition rates but only in the state's community college system (NCSL, 2014). The Appendix provides a map summarizing the variation in state laws relative to access to college for undocumented youths.

### *The federal DREAM Act and access to citizenship*

The last comprehensive immigration reform adopted by the U.S. Congress dates back to 1996, when the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) was adopted. In 2001, after acceding to the White House, President George W. Bush indicated that immigration reform would be part of his agenda. Various bills have been introduced since then,

even after the change in administration in 2008, but no comprehensive new strategy has been adopted. Today, there are about 42 million immigrants living in the United States. Among those, about 11.7 million are undocumented immigrants, of whom about 4.4 million are under the age of 30 (Passel, Cohn and Barrera, 2013). This number shows a slight decrease since the peak of undocumented immigration at 12.2 million in 2007. This decline can be partly explained by the current difficulties experienced by the U.S. economy, which render the country less attractive to potential migrants. This has led an increasing number of departures of Mexican nationals to depart from the United States, which has made the net migration from Mexico to the United States stall (Passel, Cohn and Barrera, 2012).

In 2001, a first attempt at relief for some undocumented youths was introduced in Congress under the name of Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act). The goals of the bill changed over time, but the basic framework of granting a path to citizenship for some undocumented youths remained the same. The DREAM Act would place unauthorized youths having arrived before the age of 16 on a track to permanent residence and even citizenship, if they completed two years in higher education or served in the armed forces. The bill however did not mandate countrywide in-state tuition policies (Frum, 2007; Mehlman-Orozco, 2011; Olivas, 2004). In spite of multiple introductions in both chambers and a successful vote in the House of Representatives in December 2010, the DREAM Act has not been adopted by Congress.

The first version of the DREAM Act had two main components. The first was to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to prevent the removal of undocumented youths who were university bound and long-term residents in the United States. The bill specifically targeted youths who were under the age of 21, who were registered in high school or in college, and who had been living in the United States for at least five years. These youths would be placed



on a conditional status which would eventually lead to legal permanent residence, and eventually citizenship. The second goal of the bill was the repeal of section 505 of IIRIRA, which would have allowed states to determine residency and non-residency status for people under their jurisdiction and therefore granting them in-state tuition and state financial aid. A discussion of the 1996 reform follows below. The original DREAM Act never reached a vote in Congress, and failed to pass within the Committee on Immigration, Education and Competitiveness. Since 2001, several version of the DREAM Act have been introduced in each new legislative session, most of them following this general framework.

In 2012, after the DREAM Act failed in Congress, the President of the United States issued an executive order which provided a two-year stay of deportation for some undocumented youths. The program was intended to provide work permits and defer deportation procedures for undocumented youths who met certain criteria such as having entered the United States before turning 16, being enrolled in school or having graduated from high school, and not having a criminal record. Alternately, undocumented youths who had been discharged from the Coast Guards or the Armed Forces would also be considered. While this measure allowed many undocumented youths to gain access to the labor market and to obtain drivers' licenses in certain states, the program is only temporary and has led activists to demand more comprehensive and permanent measures.

In 2013, Congress considered a comprehensive overhaul of immigration legislation, which included language taken directly from past DREAM Act bills. The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013, as the reform was entitled, would have repealed section 505 of IIRIRA in order to make college more affordable for undocumented students. It allowed some undocumented youths to adjust their status to that of "registered provisional immigrant" (RPI) and eventually to legal permanent resident (LPR) if

they had attended college or served in the military. It would also have allowed undocumented youths who had been deported to re-enter the United States if they met the same criteria. The bill had no age limit, but it cut off the entry date into the United States at December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011. The bill passed the Senate in June 2013, but was rejected by the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives (Lowery, 2014; Parker and Martin, 2013).

### *Research focus*

This research project is framed by the argument that higher education can promote citizenship and immigrant incorporation. Indeed, state laws on undocumented students seem to provide new paths of incorporation, with a new emphasis on earning citizenship by getting a college degree. The importance of university education as part of a contract established between immigrants and the government seems to give a new role to public institutions of higher education. These laws also have the potential to change the content of citizenship, and the way citizenship could be *obtained* rather than *granted*. Traditionally, only the federal government can grant American citizenship, according to the rules of naturalization established by the Constitution. Nevertheless, states largely regulated access to citizenship until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, state laws related to undocumented students now seem to follow a concept of citizenship based on social, economic and political participation, and on the struggle of a minority to gain access to rights and protections granted by the Constitution (Bosniak, 2000; De Genova, 2006; Ngai, 2004; Rocco, 2006). Increasing interest in the domain of immigration on the part of states has led to an explosion of the number of state laws related to immigration

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<sup>1</sup> The United States operated without federal regulation of immigration during most of 19<sup>th</sup> century, until the 1893 *Fong Yue Ting v. The United States* ruling from the Supreme Court established that the regulation of immigration was related to foreign affairs, and therefore Congress has absolute power over it (see Ngai, 2004: 58).

and immigrants adopted in the last fifteen years. These laws, even if they do not directly question the preemption of the federal government in the domain of immigration (*De Canas v. Bica*, 1976), seem to question whether there is a *de facto* delegation of powers from the central government to the states on the specific issue of unauthorized migration.

Governmental policies at the federal, state, and local level structure opportunities for immigrants and their children (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). State laws affecting access to public institutions of higher education focus mostly on eligibility for in-state tuition. Since the 1973 *Vlandis v. Kline* decision, the Supreme Court has acknowledged the rights of states to provide preferential tuition fees to its residents. However the cost of college – or the perceived cost of college – can have an effect on youths' graduation and enrollment rates (Lopez, 2009). Undocumented youths attend college in much lower rates than other groups: about 40 percent of them do not graduate high school, and less than half of those who do go on to college (Gonzales, 2007, 2011). In times of economic distress, inequalities take a toll on trust levels and on civic engagement (Uslaner and Brown, 2005). Public policies which accommodate immigrant minorities by providing greater access to public institutions of higher education can promote social trust, civic engagement and foster political incorporation, as well as improve their economic standing (Hochschild and Mollenkopf, 2009; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010; Powers et al. 2004). As state laws alter the rights and the life trajectories of undocumented immigrant youths, the distinguishable points of exclusion and inclusion are multiplied, and the nation's borders become indistinguishable from the interior (Ngai, 2004). The focus of this study is on state laws which attempt to redress some of the inequalities in treatment experienced by undocumented youths in the U.S. educational system. Even though the law considers these youths as political *objects*, its adoption helps provide greater access to higher education and therefore improves their ability to become political *subjects* (Abrego, 2008).

The goal of this research project is to increase our knowledge of the relationship between state laws related to immigration and the experiences of immigrants within these states. The number of state laws in this domain has increased exponentially over the last ten years, with potential consequences for the relationship between the states and the federal government, but also between the states and immigrants, since they are the principal targets of these laws. Immigrants are more and more dispersed throughout the United States, and no longer exclusively concentrated in traditional gateway cities, so the number of states involved in immigrant-related legislation has increased (Ngai, 2004; Waters and Jiménez, 2005). The relationship between states and the federal government has been the cause for much debate, even though restrictive state and local policies related to immigrants are nothing new (Colorado Attorney General, 2007; GAO, 1990; Cortez, 2008; Ngai, 2004; Salsbury, 2004). However, the effects of state laws on the experiences of undocumented immigrants still need more investigation. State laws on access to in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants target a significant population (Hoefer, 2008; Passel and Cohn, 2009) which is marginalized but has recently become an actor on the American political scene (Abrego, 2011; Seif, 2006).

According to the Pew Hispanic Center, there are about 4.4 million undocumented youths under the age of 30 living in the United States today (Passel and Lopez, 2012). Since many of them live in mixed-status families which include documented immigrants and U.S. citizens, any state law which targets undocumented students is likely to have a wide-ranging effect on a much larger population (Bean et al., 2011; Massey and Sanchez, 2010; Ngai, 2004). This research project will increase our knowledge of a growing but outcast group in our society, and the effects of the changing U.S. legal system on their lives, along with the multiple strategies of incorporation which derive from these changes (Gonzales, 2011; Menjivar and Abrego, 2009).

This project seeks to document a comprehensive measure of belonging among Latino<sup>2</sup> immigrant youths which includes various measures of assimilation (language proficiency, education, interaction with other groups and with the majority groups) but also measures of civic engagement and political participation. The rationale behind this comprehensive approach is that civic engagement and political participation constitute a sign of further belonging in one's host country, and develop a stake for immigrant youths. The project will document this measure in the states of New York and New Jersey, which up until December 2013 had adopted different statutes regarding access to in-state tuition for undocumented youths. As will be described in details below, New York has adopted a statute in 2002 granting access to in-state tuition for some undocumented youths, while New Jersey did not adopt such a statute until December 2013.

### **Undocumented immigrants and access to college**

#### *Access to the primary and secondary education system*

The Supreme Court has had multiple opportunities to issue a decision regarding access to the primary and secondary education system, and each time the Court has insisted on the fact that education is primarily a service provided by the states, rather than a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. In 1973, the *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez* decision overturned a Texas district court decision which had described education as a fundamental right protected by the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution. The Supreme Court had been asked to review the funding arrangement of various school districts in order to determine if unequal funding contradicted the Equal Protection Clause. The High Court noted that “the importance of a service performed by the State does not determine whether it must be

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<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this dissertation, the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” are used interchangeably.

regarded as fundamental for purposes of examination under the Equal Protection Clause” (1973: 9). The Court therefore declared that education was not a fundamental right guaranteed to those who live in the United States, since it was not part of the rights listed in the Constitution.

In the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision, the Court overturned a state law which barred access to public schools to undocumented children. The Court reiterated its views on education, but provided a guarantee that undocumented children should be able to attend public schools in the United States. The Court however specified that this was not because education was a fundamental right, but a necessary step in order to prevent a profound division within the American population between those who had access to the K-12 system and those who did not. At the time, graduating from high school provided the necessary credentials to enter the labor market and succeed. By denying undocumented children the right to pursue their secondary education, states would promote the emergence of “a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries, surely adding to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime” (1982: 457). Based on these two decisions, education is not a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution, and therefore its level of funding and access depends on the willingness of state legislatures. The 1982 decision solved the issue of access to education for undocumented youths up until their high school graduation. With the reforms adopted in 1996, inequalities of treatment tend to affect undocumented youth when they enter college, where they are not guaranteed to same level of access as their documented and citizen peers.

### *The 1996 reforms*

In 1996, the Republican-controlled Congress adopted and the Democratic President signed vast reforms concerning welfare and immigration policy. The *Personal Responsibility and*

*Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* barred immigrants' access to a variety of means-tested programs. The law denied most newcomers access to benefits for their first five years of residence in the United States. This posed a problem for states which were still mandated to provide emergency assistance to all. A 1997 report by the National Council of State Legislatures (NCSL) indicated that many states implemented programs to meet the needs of newly-arrived immigrants, yet lamented the shift in financial responsibility from the federal government to states and localities (NCSL, 1997). In addition to welfare, Congress also enacted immigration reform in 1996 through the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act*. Concerning access to higher education benefits, the act included a section on eligibility which stated:

“an alien who is not lawfully present in the United States shall not be eligible on the basis of residence within a State [...] for any postsecondary education benefit unless a citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit [...] without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident” (U.S. Congress, 1996).

This section aimed at preventing states from granting in-state tuition and financial aid to undocumented students based on their residence within that state. Indeed, by granting them in-state tuition, states may have to renounce the lucrative out-of-state tuition fees that they request residents from other states to pay (Perry, 2006). In New Jersey in 2014, the rate for resident tuition is \$10,718 for undergraduate admissions, but \$24,742 for non-residents and international students (Rutgers Office of Student Accounting, Billing and Cashiering, 2014). The idea behind this provision in the law was to increase the number of financial obstacles for

college and to deter undocumented students from attending public universities and community colleges (Yates, 2004).

In addition to higher education, the act covered the domain of law enforcement. Section 287(g) granted state and local authorities the possibility to implement immigration law if they signed an agreement with the federal government, leading to a multiplication of immigration screenings at the municipal, county and state level. Thus federal agents were no longer the only ones in charge of immigration implementation, which led to a blurring of immigration enforcement boundaries (Armenta, 2010). Even though the act was passed in 1996, the first agreement between the federal government and local authorities was only signed in 2002, in Florida. Since then, hundreds of such agreements have been signed. According to Armenta (2010), local officers in charge of immigration screenings are acting as extensions of the federal government rather than as independent agents of the states. Newton and Adams (2009) described the relationship between the national government and the states on immigration as one of cooperation rather than conflict, with exceptions occurring mostly on fiscal issues. They noted that states mostly support federal efforts, but regulate policies which are considered to be part of the traditional prerogative of the states, such as policing or education.

### *The DREAM Act and DACA*

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act has been modified several times since its original introduction in Congress in 2001. According to the National Immigration Law Center and the Library of Congress, the 2001 bill proposed the repeal of section 505 of the *Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act* of 1996, which bars states from providing in-state tuition to noncitizens unless they offer the same benefit to U.S. citizens of other states. The original bill also created a conditional nonimmigrant



status for certain immigrant youths who were under 21, had been in the United States for at least 5 years, and were able to demonstrate their “good moral character.” The bill would also have put them on a path to citizenship after they had graduated from an institution of higher education, proved the constancy of their good moral character, and maintained their residence in the United States. The bill has evolved over time to include those immigrants who are either enrolled in college or serving in the armed forces, thus staying consistent with U.S. tradition of granting citizenship based on deservedness (Rocco, 2006). The 2013 immigration reform, which was adopted by the Senate in June 2013, included a version of the DREAM Act which no longer imposed an age cap to potential recipients of the law.

In December 2010, the U.S. Congress failed to adopt the DREAM Act by a few votes in the Senate (Herszenhorn, 2010). As a result, the issue was picked up by the executive branch. In June 2012, the President of the United States announced the introduction of new discretionary measures entitled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA). The program was intended to provide work permits and defer deportation procedures for undocumented youth who met certain criteria such as having entered the United States before turning 16, being enrolled in school or having graduated from high school, and not having a criminal record. Alternately, undocumented youths who had been discharged from the Coast Guards or the Armed Forces would also be considered. The requirements for the policy included items such as having arrived in the United States before turning 16, or being able to show that the applicant had been continually residing in the United States since June 15, 2007, that is to say exactly 5 years before the policy was introduced. This new policy gave some undocumented youths a renewable stay of deportation of two years, and some states introduced legislation to grant DACA recipients drivers’ licenses and in-state tuition.

### *State laws on access to college for undocumented youths*

Higher education is financially and legislatively under the responsibility of states, so this is a policy area where state-level actors are free to promote or oppose certain federal policies (Newton and Adams, 2009). Some states like Texas or New Mexico decided to grant in-state tuition to undocumented students if they met certain requirements, working at the margins of the 1996 federal law which attempted to ban these measures (Yates, 2004). Others like Arizona or Missouri prohibited these students from qualifying for any state aid, and even sought out to ban them from admission in public universities.

Texas was the first state to adopt a law favorable to undocumented students in 2001 (HB 1403). The law actually recognizes as a resident of the state *for tuition purposes* any student who met certain criteria. These students had to have graduated from a high school in the state, have lived in the state for the three years prior to graduating, have registered as an entering student in an institution of higher education starting in the academic year 2001-2002, and agreed to sign an affidavit certifying that he or she would apply for permanent residence as soon as is possible for him or her to do so. Salsbury (2004) describes this type of law which classifies undocumented students as residents of the state for tuition purposes as the Texan model. These states grant the status of resident for a purely academic purpose, therefore without usurping the powers of the federal government.

California was the second state to adopt this type of law, also in 2001 (AB 540, 2001). The law exempted some students from non-resident tuition if they met certain requirements, such as having attended a high school in the state for at least three years, having graduated from a high school in the state, registering as an entering student no earlier than in the academic year 2001-2002, and finally by signing an affidavit promising to applying for permanent residence as soon as would be legally possible. According to Salsbury (2004), the laws which follow the

California model abstain from using the term “resident,” which allows them to circumvent Section 505 more easily because they do not introduce a connection between the student’s place of residence and his or her access to in-state tuition. Indeed, these laws do not require the student to have lived in the state prior to attending college, but simply to have attended and graduated from a high school in the state.

### *The New York case*

This project will focus on the two states comprising the New York City and northern New Jersey metropolitan area. As mentioned above, the State of New York adopted a law granting in-state tuition to undocumented students in 2002. New York State is in fact one of six states where the majority of unauthorized immigrants live (Passel and Cohn, 2010). The statute adopted in 2002 was primarily seeking to institutionalize earlier practices in the public universities of the state which had been reversed following the stricter enforcement of immigration policy after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

As early as in the 1980s, undocumented students living in the State of New York were allowed to pay in-state tuition in the state’s two largest university systems, the City University of New York (CUNY) and the State University of New York (SUNY). However, as Rincón (2008) notes, restrictions were put in place following the 1996 immigration reform and the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, which barred undocumented students from qualifying for in-state tuition at SUNY after 1998, and at CUNY in spring 2002. The changes in CUNY included cuts in the Peter Vallone scholarship, for which undocumented youths had been eligible. Following the changes in CUNY, several groups such as the Mexican American Student Alliance, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Citizenship and Immigration Project came together in a coalition to promote state legislation that would provide

in-state tuition for some undocumented youths. The bill was signed into law as early as August 9, 2002, and included a grandfather clause to include students who had paid out-of-state tuition after the earlier reversal of policy. These policies were adopted at the state level as a direct reaction to changes in federal immigration legislation and enforcement, but also to write into law practices which had been ongoing since the 1980s.

Undocumented students admitted to the state's public universities have thus been able to attend at a lower cost than might have been true otherwise, and several cohorts have had the chance to graduate since the statute was official adopted (Conger and Chellman, 2011).

### *The New Jersey case*

In New Jersey, proponents of in-state tuition have pursued their campaign over the last decade. The state legislature saw a progressive acceleration over time in the number of bills introduced which dealt with immigrants and access to in-state tuition for undocumented youths, and has recently granted access to in-state tuition.

In the 2000-2001 legislative session, no bills were introduced which dealt with this topic. However in the 2002-2003 legislative session, one member of the legislature introduced a bill to allow undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates. The content of the bill followed the California model, which had also been adopted by New York, which exempted some undocumented youths from paying non-resident rates if they met certain criteria. During the 2004-2005 legislative session, two bills were introduced which related to undocumented immigration. The first one sought to create a "Commission on Undocumented Immigrants", which would study the undocumented immigrant population living in the state, its contributions and costs, and its vulnerability on the labor-market. The commission would report back to the

legislature. In addition, another bill similar to the one introduced in the previous legislative session sought to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students.

An increase in activity was visible in the 2006-2007 legislative session, when another tuition bill was introduced, only this time with multiple co-sponsors instead of single sponsorship. That year, one of the Republican members of the legislature also introduced a resolution condemning the Mexican government for mistreating undocumented immigrants from Central and South America and for criticizing the immigration policy of the United States. In the next legislative session, in 2008 and 2009, a new tuition bill was introduced. This time, the number of co-sponsors jumped from 5 to 20, and the bill was for the first time reported out of committee. The bill also produced a fiscal estimate which indicated that its enactment would add no cost to the state over the following years.

Around that time, the mobilization in favor of tuition equity in New Jersey began to take shape. In 2010, several undocumented youths who had met while lobbying the legislature founded the New Jersey Dream Act Coalition. This organization became the main state-level group supporting tuition equity for undocumented students, and ultimately helped coordinate efforts with other organizations scattered within the state, such as Anakbayan (a Filipino organization based in Jersey City, New Jersey) and the Rutgers University Tuition Equity Coalition. They also joined other states' organizations and national groups to lobby for the DREAM Act in Congress in 2010. The New Jersey Dream Act Coalition benefitted from training from New York-based organizations such as the New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC). Yet, during the 2010-2011 legislative session a new bill was introduced, this time with only 3 co-sponsors. Another bill was also introduced at the same time to allow public institutions of higher education to adopt an in-municipality tuition rate for students who had graduated from a high school located within the same municipality, but it was not enacted.

Finally, in the 2012-2013 legislative session two new bills were introduced. One only sought to grant in-state tuition to undocumented students, while the other sought to grant both in-state tuition and state financial aid. The latter obtained more co-sponsors, and actually passed in the legislature. However after a conditional veto by Governor Chris Christie regarding financial aid, it was modified to provide only in-state tuition, and was adopted by the state legislature on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and signed into law on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

### **Education, assimilation, and engagement**

The idea of individual development through education, which is a pillar of American political culture, can be studied alongside theories stating that assimilation happens through the interaction between majority and minority groups (Alba and Nee, 1997, 2003). Indeed, the willingness of unauthorized youth to go to college after graduating from high school shows that they have integrated one of the basic values of American political culture: higher education fosters personal development and upward mobility (Abrego, 2011). Young immigrants share in the idea that education is linked to social mobility, and that higher education is the key to individual promotion in an American society based on meritocracy (Carnevale and Fry, 2000; Haveman and Smeeding, 2006). Some of them have also understood that more educated people tend to be those who have a voice and whose ideas will be heard (Skocpol, 2003; Verba et al., 1995). Therefore, when states regulate access to in-state tuition within their own jurisdiction, they actually promote – or deny – among this group the potential for economic and civic participation. By controlling college access, states are implementing a *de facto* path to citizenship, one that is based on substantive participation and can be earned through higher education.

The United States has a history of other forms of earned citizenship, mainly through participation in the military as a way for outsiders to prove their deservedness (Rocco, 2006). The lingering DREAM Act bill in Congress represents the promise of another means of access to citizenship, this time through participation in institutions of higher education. The bill offers legal status to undocumented youths who are willing to commit to the military or to college, even if the later versions of the bill have mostly insisted on participation in the military. The state laws on which this dissertation project is based can be considered as state-level versions of this bill, since they grant a new economic and education-based form of substantive citizenship to undocumented youths within their own jurisdictions.

### **Claims**

The policy environment has an effect on the experiences of immigrants living within certain jurisdictions, whether it is the United States or each individual state. The policies adopted by various levels of government also affect immigrants' levels of civic and political engagement (Bloemraad, 2006; Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010). This is particularly important for undocumented immigrants who are technically at the fringe of political participation, and are prevented from participating by clear legal restrictions (González, 2010). This project seeks to investigate whether accommodating laws such as the one adopted by New York in 2002 promote greater sense of belonging among undocumented immigrants. It will rely on two possible outcomes illustrating belonging, one through actual sense of belonging and trust in the United States, and the other one through levels of civic and political engagement.

This project makes several assumptions. The first one is that policies which are accommodating – such as those which grant access to in-state tuition – should be associated with greater feelings of belonging in the United States and greater levels of civic and political

engagement among undocumented youths. This is due to the fact that these policies provide the necessary resources for greater assimilation (interaction through institutions) and engagement (skills, time, money, weak ties). The second assumption is that contexts which are less accommodating – where access to in-state tuition is not granted by the legislature – are expected to provide lower levels of belonging in the United States, due to the negative construction of undocumented immigrants through the image that the policy relays to the public, the absence of group interaction through institutions of higher education, and the lack of resources necessary for civic and political participation.

### *Policy accommodation and belonging*

College attendance and graduation for immigrants is associated in the immigration literature with greater integration and incorporation (Alba and Nee, 2003; Alba and Waters, 2011). Here the research project will follow more closely the experiences of undocumented immigrants, who are the target of an increasing number of state laws.

The goal of this research project is to investigate the relationship between college access for undocumented immigrants through eligibility for in-state tuition on the one hand, and their sense of belonging in the United States on the other. The goal is to ascertain whether obtaining a college education through changes in state statutes is associated with a positive attitude towards the United States and its institutions among young unauthorized immigrants. Even though eligibility for in-state tuition is not the only factor in college access, it is a significant step for undocumented immigrants for multiple reasons. First, it may encourage them to actually graduate from high school by giving them the same opportunities as their fellow students. Second, it may increase their hopes about their future in the United States by showing



that their state is considering them as political subjects who deserve to be educated along with the rest of the population.

In addition, college attendance and college graduation can have both direct and indirect impacts on immigrants' sense of belonging in the United States. Direct impacts include the possibility for undocumented youths to interact with other groups, which they may not be able to do in high school considering the high level of segregation in the American educational system (Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor, 2008). The increased opportunity to interact with other minority groups, as well as with the majority group, may provide the basis for the assimilation processes described in the sociology and political science literature (Alba and Nee, 1997, 2003; Kalter, 2011). College attendance may decrease the sense of marginalization of undocumented immigrants by placing them in the same track as other youths who are documented immigrants or native-born citizens. This equality of treatment is what Alba and Nee (1997, 2003) emphasized as the stepping stone towards minority participation in higher education, which may in turn lead to higher levels of assimilation. By providing in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants and giving them the same opportunities as other groups, states are providing the basic context for this equality of treatment between them and the rest of the population.

### *Policy accommodation and civic engagement*

The second part of the relationship between college access and sense of belonging in the United States is based on the economic, civic and political consequences of attending college. College attendance is usually associated with an increase in earnings and civic skills, which can lead to an increase in political and civic engagement (Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998; Skocpol, 2003; Verba et al., 1995). The goal of the project is to ascertain whether this relationship is

valid for undocumented immigrants, who are barred by clear legal restrictions from making gains on the labor markets and from political participation.

Policies increasing eligibility for in-state tuition could be positively associated with higher levels of civic and political engagement because, as a vast literature has shown, a college education leads to better labor market outcomes (Haveman and Smeeding, 2006). Higher earnings in turn are associated with higher rates of civic and political engagement. Greater access to college overall may improve young immigrants' levels of civic and political engagement by providing them with the necessary resources presented in the literature for participation, such as civic skills, time, and money. In addition, college attendance can increase the number of bridging ties available to young undocumented immigrants – ties with individuals outside of the community of origin - rather than bonding ties – that is to say those ties to individuals within the community of origin (Gidengil and Stolle, 2009; Granovetter, 1973). Bridging ties help expose individuals to political views that they may not be familiar with, and increase their social capital, which is usually associated with greater levels of civic engagement (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol, 2003).

Bridging ties may be created in college as well as in the workplace. The project therefore seeks to investigate the differences in the type of resources which are provided to undocumented youths by increasing access to college. The workplace often provides only limited opportunities for bridging ties, and tends to favor those workers who are already in the most advantageous positions. Greater access to college may therefore help young undocumented immigrants overcome the limitations associated with the type of workplace where they usually end up, and the type of friendships and social patterns which derive from them (Gonzales, 2011).

## **Structure of the dissertation**

The dissertation will build on data collected in 2012 and 2013 to evaluate the claims made above. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature on immigrant assimilation and immigrant participation in higher education. It also presents the patterns and challenges of immigrant political participation, and provides an overview of how policy design and images affect civic engagement and political participation. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the mixed-method approach chosen for this project, along with a description of the data collected in New York and New Jersey.

Chapters 4 through 9 provide the results from the analyses of the data. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the results obtained on the first series of claim relative to immigrant youths and levels of belonging. Chapter 4 is based on the quantitative data collected from a survey of both documented and undocumented Latino immigrant youth, while Chapter 5 presents the analysis of in-depth interviews with Latino undocumented youth on issues related to the concepts of “home” and the challenges of group identification in the United States. Chapters 6 and 7 address the second series of claims made above and deal with the civic engagement and political participation of Latino immigrant youths. Chapter 6 presents the results obtained from the survey, looking at factors of civic engagement and political participation, while Chapter 7 presents the analysis of interviews with Latino undocumented youth, and especially the types of resources made available to them through greater college access. This chapter also highlights the multiplicity of state policies which play a role in the political mobilization of undocumented immigrant youths.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on the experiences of undocumented immigrant youths when dealing with federal-level policies. Chapter 8 provides an overview of undocumented youths’ perspective on federal immigration reform and on the mobilization of undocumented youths in

favor of the DREAM Act, and highlights the issues of inclusiveness and exclusiveness in the image associated with policy change. Chapter 9 provides a more practical illustration of the relationship between immigrant youths and federal policy. It presents the variety of experiences among undocumented youth in their approach to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Chapter 10 provides a summary of the results from the project, and describes areas where future research will have to be conducted.

## **Chapter 2: Understanding Immigrant Political Incorporation**

The goal of this project is to investigate differences in levels of belonging among Latino immigrant youths, and more particularly among undocumented Latino immigrant youths. This research is framed by theoretical approaches relative to immigrant assimilation, political incorporation, and policy design. As a first step, it is important to provide some context for understanding the factors that shape the experiences of Latino immigrant youths and how they come to be politically active or disengaged.

In this chapter, the main steps toward immigrant assimilation and political incorporation are reviewed. Since this project intends to provide a comparison of two state contexts, it takes into account the existence of both internal and external factors of immigrant political incorporation. Internal factors are those related to the actions and choices of immigrants themselves. According to the literature on immigrant political incorporation, time spent in the United States is usually associated with higher assimilation levels in terms of socio-economic gains, and with greater access and experience in education. The accumulation of these social, economic, and educational gains eventually lead immigrants toward greater civic and political engagement. For undocumented immigrants however, the ability to make these gains is limited due to clear formal restrictions on access to citizenship and the political process. Yet their participation in other avenues of inclusion such as the labor market, schools, and communities provides opportunities for greater incorporation. The challenges encountered by this group highlight the possibility for parallel processes of incorporation to take place across multiple contexts of reception.

External factors of political incorporation include those changes in governmental policies which affect immigrants' abilities and willingness to participate in civic and political endeavors. Undocumented immigrants' access to avenues of inclusion is affected by the policies adopted at the state level, especially in regards to education. It is therefore equally necessary to review the literature on the potential effects of policy design and policy implementation on political participation, since they can provide both support and barriers for participation. Immigrant assimilation has been discussed widely in the political science and sociology literature. This section will provide an overview of the debates regarding the assimilation process and the use of measures of assimilation.

### **The assimilation process**

Scholarly research on the assimilation of immigrants has been going on for the better part of a century. One of the early understandings of assimilation was based on the idea that greater assimilation would lead to the erosion of differences between groups. This was based on the works of Park (1950) regarding spatial assimilation in cities, as well as Milton Gordon (1964). The latter presented the assimilation process of immigrants as the passage through a series of three stages: acculturation, structural assimilation, and finally marital assimilation. This understanding of assimilation provided the basic scenario for the "straight-line assimilation" model, in which immigrants are eventually absorbed by the majority group, which remains almost unchanged over time. This model was complemented by the works of Dahl (1961), who presented the path toward assimilation as a progressive transformation of immigrants into indistinguishable Americans. Another early approach to establishing a large-scale approach to immigrant assimilation came with the advent of the generational models developed by Hansen (1938) who described the behavior of the third generation of immigrants, specifically their

return to the values of an earlier immigrant generation. This was supplemented by Wolfinger (1964), who more specifically focused on the persistence of ethnic voting and its consequences for immigrant assimilation patterns.

More recent attempts to provide a framework of immigrant assimilation have distanced themselves from the “straight-line” assimilation model. The two approaches which have emerged either emphasize the diversity in outcomes for the second generation, or the need to rethink the “mainstream” described by the model (Waters et al., 2010). First, advocates of segmented assimilation looked into the possibility that not all groups experienced the same progress toward assimilation, which leads to very different results in the second generation. For example, Gans (1992) described a “bumpy” rather than a smooth route toward assimilation, based on the characteristics of immigrant groups and the behavior of the majority group. Portes and Zhou (1993) describe a process of “segmented assimilation,” in which pathways of integration are channeled in different directions depending on the characteristics of the immigrants and the nature of society’s reaction to them. The latter element – the external factors coming directly from the host society – are central to this research project. Brettell (2003), along with Portes and Rumbaut (2006), has emphasized the role of positive and negative contexts of reception on immigrants’ pathways of incorporation. Some contexts are described as “disadvantaged” (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006: 201) if government policies are unfavorable to newcomers. In this research project, state laws increasing access to in-state tuition can be understood as a positive step taken by the government to foster a “receptive context” (ibid, p. 202) for a particularly marginalized group. However, the policies in place in New Jersey until late 2013 can be considered as fostering a “disadvantaged” context of reception for undocumented immigrants. Therefore the straight-line assimilation models do not

take into account all of the factors – whether related to the immigrant group or to the context in which they settle – which may lead them to experience a “bumpy” assimilation.

Second, recent scholarly works on immigrant assimilation have led us to revise the idea of the “immutable” mainstream towards which the straight-line models tend. Alba (2005) looked into the experiences of the second generation, and explained that the bright boundaries which separate immigrants from the mainstream become blurred when members of an ethnic minority are no longer clearly located with respect to the mainstream. This large-scale assimilation and boundary-crossing are due to changes within the mainstream itself, and to widespread non-zero-sum political economy (Alba, 2009). Massey and Sánchez (2010) have also questioned the linearity and the inevitability of assimilation presented in earlier research. According to them, assimilation is a two-way street, which they define as the “process of boundary-brokering in which immigrants arrive with their individual motivations, social expectations, and psychological framings and encounter natives, who have their own motivations, expectations, and framings” (2010: 250). Over time, the daily interactions of immigrants and natives help assimilation unfold. The mainstream, according to the most recent research on immigrant assimilation, becomes dynamic and transformed through the assimilation process.

For Putnam (2007), the short-term effect of immigration may be to decrease the social capital of immigrant families, but in the long terms the more successful immigrant societies will create new, more encompassing identities, based on a broader understanding of the society’s “we.” This perspective was already introduced by Waters (1994), for whom individuals from the second generation have an increasing number of options for establishing their identities due to the interaction of race and class. Based on their experience with discrimination and the values established by society, some second-generation immigrants can choose alternate identities from within the mainstream.



More recently, other researchers have also presented the possibility for immigrants to remain separated from the mainstream, either because of discrimination or as a voluntary choice on their part. Nauk (2001) has postulated that there are four possible outcomes due to intercultural contact: integration, assimilation, segregation, and marginalization. The overall assimilation process is affected by both opportunity structures and action barriers such as discrimination or “disadvantageous” policies. Those who experience discrimination in their host society may rely more on close relationships, and therefore end up in segregated milieu. He describes this process as selective acculturation. To counteract the negative effects of discrimination or policies, some immigrants can turn to churches and religious organizations, which provide shelter from discrimination and opportunities for economic mobility (García Coll and Szalacha, 2004; Hirschman, 2004). Recent work on assimilation has thus radically changed the perception of immigrant assimilation, rendering it less predictable regarding the experiences of immigrants but also the final outcome of assimilation.

### *Measures of assimilation*

This project seeks to present a comprehensive understanding of the subjective sense of belonging by relying on both measures of assimilation and participation in civic and political endeavors. The literature provides multiple markers which have been used to measure the level of assimilation of immigrants. For example, Waters and Jimenez (2005) establish four variables on which assimilation can be measured: socio-economic status, residential concentration, language assimilation and intermarriage. Assimilation can also be measured by the degree to which immigrants have naturalized as citizens within their host country, if the legislation in place allows them to do so (Sumption and Flamm, 2012). A great number of outcomes for different generations of immigrants can be compared. These differences affect many domains,

such as the structure of immigrants' networks and residential patterns (Kasinitz, Matsumoto and Zelter-Subida, 2011), their educational attainment (Kasinitz et al., 2004; Lowell and Suro, 2002; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001), their linguistic assimilation (Beans and Stevens, 2003), levels of participation in the labor market (Alba and Waters, 2011; Waldinger and Lichter, 2003), and ultimately, their attachment to the United States or to their home country (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Waldinger, 2007).

Time spent in the United States also affects values and beliefs about one's capacity to succeed there. This trend was explicitly shown in a survey of Latinos comprising native-born and foreign-born Latinos. Since unauthorized immigrants are overwhelmingly – over 80 percent – from Latin America, with over 50 percent coming from Mexico (Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013), it is useful for this research project to rely on data collected about the Latino population in general. Thus, in a 2002 survey of Latinos, researchers at the Kaiser Foundation and the Pew Hispanic Center found that immigrants tend to be more fatalistic about their future and about their ability to change their own destiny than Latinos who were born in the United States or whose families have been in the country for several generations (2002: 8). The survey also showed that Latinos tend to identify themselves through their country of origin rather than as “Americans”, except for those whose families have been in the United States for “multiple generations” (2002: 23).

### *Transnationalism*

Because this project uses the civic and political engagement of immigrants as an outcome, it calls for a broad understanding of where this engagement can be exercised. Some immigrants choose to become involved in civic and political endeavors which are directed toward their country of origin rather than their host country. Transnationalism can have a negative impact

on the political and civic engagement of immigrants in the United States, because it encourages immigrants to focus on the development of their country of origin rather than on their own evolution in the host country. As DeSipio (2006) has showed, respondents who engaged in home-country electoral activities are less likely than others to report having an intention of staying in the U.S. permanently. Usually, transnational ties disappear as the number of generations living in the host country increases (Tamaki, 2011).

Nevertheless, recent research has shown that immigration is not a unidirectional phenomenon, and therefore the outcomes of immigration should not solely be located in the host country (Sassen, 1999). This transnational option can provide an outlet for migrants seeking to construct their own identity separately from the mainstream and to broker hard boundaries (Dreby, 2009; Tamaki, 2011). Through transnationalism, communities of origin and of destination are linked together simultaneously rather than through a linear process (Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1995; Smith, 2006; Viramontes, 2008). Across the two countries, various networks and institutions can support the circulation of people, money, ideas, and values (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007). A comprehensive understanding of immigrants' subjective sense of belonging must therefore include the measurement of all of immigrants' civic and political activities, including those that help them maintain a link to their country of origin.

### *The assimilation of undocumented immigrants*

It is important to note that, even after taking into account the “bumpy” route toward assimilation and the role of policies in providing a specific context for assimilation, not all immigrant groups experience the same process of assimilation. Some immigrants may ultimately be left out of this transition, or suffer from “delayed incorporation” due to their characteristics as a group. As Brown (2007) showed, Mexican immigrants tend to experience

delayed incorporation, which is evidenced in their spatial assimilation patterns. Immigration status also plays a role on the ability and speed with which immigrant groups assimilate into the mainstream. This is particularly the case for Hispanic immigrants, who represent the vast majority of undocumented immigrants in the United States (Passel and Cohn, 2011; Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). For example, Bean et al. (2011) have demonstrated the impact of immigration status on the assimilation and incorporation of marginal groups. In particular, mixed-status families experience these negative effects on their children's educational attainment. As a result, Mexicans tend to experience delayed incorporation due to the high proportion of mixed-status families within this group, which forces them to adopt multiple strategies of incorporation.

The assimilation of undocumented immigrants presents several challenges. Because of the legal restrictions imposed on them regarding access to the labor market and to citizenship, it appears as if the group cannot make the socio-economic gains or interact with the mainstream in ways that would lead to greater assimilation. However, young undocumented immigrants who have grown up in the United States do appear to be assimilated based on the markers described above: they have high levels of educational attainment, linguistic assimilation, and they are strongly attached to the United States (Gonzales, 2008; 2011). The activists within the "Dreamers" movement specifically highlight all of these characteristics in order to reinforce the claims they are making in the U.S. Congress (Pérez, 2012). Young undocumented immigrants therefore present a paradox which the literature on assimilation needs to answer, especially regarding the possibility of assimilation in the face of formal legal restrictions.

### *Defining political incorporation*

In this research project civic and political engagement are conceptualized as related to immigrants' sense of belonging in their host country, and is related to immigrants' process of assimilation. Assimilation and political incorporation differ in the sense that assimilation tends to focus mainly on the individual, while political incorporation deals with the "influence of social groups and organizations into political institutions" (Ramakrishnan, 2013: 34). The approach of this project is consistent with the one developed by Stepick and Stepick (2002), who used a broad concept of civic engagement which includes youths' relationship to the state but also their broader relationship to society by becoming members of a polity.

Political incorporation is the end product of a long process of assimilation for immigrants. Civic incorporation is one of the first steps toward this end goal, and it is understood as the sharing in core political values, in this case American values such as economic individualism and patriotism (de la Garza, Falcón, and García, 1996). Political incorporation is a concept that has been defined as "the extent to which self-identified group interests are articulated, represented, and met in public policymaking" (Fraga and Ramírez, 2003: 304). More recently, political incorporation has been defined as "having the capacity for sustained claims making about the allocation of symbolic or material public goods" (Hochschild et al., 2013).

In this project immigrant mobilization centers on access to public benefits, and political incorporation is understood through three analytical dimensions: access, opportunity and institutionalization. Incorporation is usually understood as a process, which starts with political influence, and is followed by representation and eventually policymaking. Political incorporation is intrinsically related to processes of assimilation, but also to the formal acquisition of citizenship. As Irene Bloemraad noted, political incorporation is "the process of becoming a part of mainstream political debates, practices and decision-making" (2006: 6). The

mainstream can become transformed through the political incorporation of immigrants in a degree that the literature on immigrant assimilation has not fully established. Recent studies have brought forward the concept of “collective-mindedness”, which comprehends social trust, civic engagement, and political participation (Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010). Processes of immigrant political incorporation therefore need to be studied alongside those of assimilation, and delve into the challenges which undocumented immigrants meet in becoming more involved in their host country.

### *Processes of immigrant political incorporation*

Assimilationist theories predict that with increased length of time in the United States, immigrants will make socioeconomic and educational gains which will improve their likelihood of political engagement (Lee et al, 2006; Okamoto and Ebert, 2010). As they spend more time in the United States, immigrants tend to naturalize more and to participate more in politics (DeSipio et al., 1998). However, as noted by Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008), the literature on civic participation and engagement tends to focus primarily on the native-born, or on traditional destination cities such as New York or Los Angeles (Benjamin-Alvarado et al., 2008; García Bedolla, 2005; Halle and Beveridge, 2013; Putnam, 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Skocpol, 2003; Verba et al., 1995). In parallel, studies on minority political incorporation and immigrant political engagement have emphasized formal activities of political participation which usually drives them to focus on the native-born or on naturalized citizens (Okamoto and Ebert, 2010). For this reason, the literature on the political incorporation of minorities may exclude portions of the foreign-born who cannot vote, since this may drive politicians to ignore their preferences in terms of policymaking (Browning, Mashall and Tabb, 1984).

Studies which focus on immigrant political incorporation cover issues such as the experiences of the second generation (Kasinitz et al., 2008), the “bureaucratic incorporation” of immigrants into local politics (Jones-Correa, 2004; Marrow, 2008), dual citizenship and its impact on political participation and party identification (Cain and Doherty, 2006), or the under-registration among Latino voters (Fraga and Ramírez, 2003). Only recently have scholars turned to what Ramakrishnan (in Lee et al., 2006; see also Dalton, 2008; Norris, 2002) calls the “other half” of immigrant civic engagement, and what Jensen and Flanagan (2008) describe as the inclusion of the *community* sphere. Varsanyi (2006) describes these activities by immigrants as “stretching the boundaries of citizenship.” These include activities related to volunteerism, translation, tutoring, membership in non-profit organizations and civic associations, all of which are strongly related to public policies (De Graauw, 2008; Flanagan and Levine, 2010; Gonzáles, 2008; Segura et al., 2001). In general, recent immigrants tend to engage in informal means of political participation, through social, cultural and religious organizations, as well as “in-between” activities in non-profit organizations (De Graauw, 2008; DeSipio, 2006; Hamlin, 2008; Jensen, 2008; Jones-Correa, 1998; Sierra, 2000).

The anti-immigrant rhetoric of the 1990s and the new restrictions on access to benefits for immigrants encouraged greater number to naturalize, which has led to an increase in the number of foreign-born, Latino voters. The surge was also related to the fact that during the same period, a number of Latin American countries relaxed their own naturalization laws to allow individuals to hold dual citizenship (Jones-Correa, 2000; Sejersen, 2008). However, when they are citizens, Latinos tend to have lower rates of voter registration and turnout. In addition, Latino non-citizens experience higher levels of distance and disinterest from political life in the U.S. (Hero et al., 2000; Segura et al., 2001). Young Latinos, immigrants or citizens, participate in politics in ways that are different from other groups. Studies have showed that

young Latinos have the highest rate of “disengaged” young people, but the highest rate of young people who have protested in the past year (Lopez et al., 2006). This can be explained by the fact that protests are usually the tool of mobilization of those with few resources (Piven and Cloward, 1979; Ramakrishnan, 2005). This disengagement could also be related to a decline in political trust as more Latinos experience discrimination in the United States (Michelson, 2003), or to barriers to participation such as a lack of citizenship. An exception has to be made for the 2008 election, in which Latino voters increased their turnout to 49 percent compared to 47 percent in 2004 (Minnite, 2010). However, this figure is still lower than that of other minorities. Besides experiences with discrimination and lack of formal citizenship, Latino youths are also concentrated in schools in low-income area have fewer opportunities for service learning, which is associated with greater civic engagement later in life (Flanagan and Levine, 2010).

Immigrants usually make gains in representation at the city level first, since they tend to concentrate in urban areas (Brettell, 2003; Waldinger, 2003). Immigrants gain seats at the local level, on school boards or city councils, which can serve as gateways to participation in the larger national context (Jones-Correa, 2001). Immigrants’ origins, date of arrival, education, naturalization, command of the English language and occupational levels all affect their engagement in politics in the various cities in which they settle (Gidengil and Stolle, 2009; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad, 2008). Research has been conducted on the political context in which immigrants live, which has an impact on their propensity to naturalize and eventually vote, with cities such as New York City promoting greater immigrant political participation than other cities such as Los Angeles, even though recent developments show the two cities converging on that issue (Foner and Waldinger, 2013; Mollenkopf, Olson and Ross, 2001).



Other studies have looked at forms of political participation beyond voting, such as signing petitions, writing to elected officials and attending local meetings, but they tend to focus on differences between ethnic and racial groups or between generations, and include mostly U.S. citizens. For example, Ramakrishnan (2005) looked at the levels of civic and political engagement of various ethnic and racial groups in California, comparing different generations among them. He showed that Latino and second-generation Asian immigrants tend to be more involved in local affairs than in voting or signing petitions. Their low levels of formal participation could be due to the fact that political activity is directly related to political mobilization and recruitment, which is usually determined by social network membership and higher social and economic resources (Hero et al., 2000; Hochschild and Mollenkopf, 2009; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012; Teorell, 2003; Tillie, 2004).

Immigrants may live in districts and neighborhoods which rank lower on the list of local targets which political parties and interest groups choose to mobilize, and therefore these communities may focus their civic engagement on local rather than national issues (Berger, Galonska, and Koopmans, 2004; Ramakrishnan, 2005). Among those local groups which have the potential to recruit immigrants for political participation are non-profit organizations and unions, since some workers' centers are tied to a particular ethnic or racial community (De Graauw, 2008; Hamlin, 2008). Unions have increased their role of mobilizing the foreign-born and recruiting them into formal politics (Varsanyi, 2006). This mode of recruitment can be beneficial to all immigrants, including the undocumented. Some workers' organizations have been set up by immigrant advocates in order to address their specific needs.

*The political incorporation of undocumented immigrants*

Undocumented immigrants face more challenges than other immigrants in terms of assimilation and political incorporation. Undocumented immigrants tend to have lower levels of education and income (Passel, Cohn and Barrera, 2013). They are also much less likely than legal immigrants or U.S.-born residents to have achieved a high school diploma, and despite high rates of labor force participation, especially among men, they tend to have lower median household income than either legal immigrants or U.S.-born residents (Passel and Cohn, 2009). Based on what the literature has showed about the requirements for civic and political mobilization, due to their characteristics as a group undocumented immigrants face greater challenges in terms of civic and political engagement.

For undocumented immigrants, political incorporation is rendered even more difficult by the clear legal restrictions placed on them by governmental policies. As is the case for all non-citizens, their lack of citizenship prevents their participation in the traditional forms of political mobilization such as voting, holding office, and donating money to campaigns (Hochschild et al., 2013). These limitations also prevent what Cook (2013) describes as the “top-down” process of incorporation, in which the host society provides pathways to citizenship and greater participation. Yet Cook’s understanding of political incorporation for undocumented immigrants focuses on the concept of “inclusion” rather than incorporation (2013: 44), meaning that she focuses on the interactions of undocumented immigrants with institutions, policies and practices which can provide them with the necessary resources for participation. Political inclusion can thus be achieved by undocumented immigrants through their participation in institutional domains such as education. This specific avenue invites us to focus more specifically on undocumented youths, who are more likely to have attended school in the United States and transitioned to college. In fact, undocumented youths have showed their

willingness to participate in the political process through their recent mobilization on the DREAM Act and state-level tuition policies. In spite of the few resources available to them as a group, they have made use of protests and collective mobilization to lay claims on public goods and a path to citizenship.

Mobilization among undocumented youths has recently emerged as topic of research in the literature (Nicholls, 2013; Pérez et al., 2010). In general, members of disenfranchised groups – such as undocumented students – are more likely to be distrusting of the law and suspicious of its implementation (Ewick and Silbey, 1998). This is all the more important for this group as higher civic engagement is associated with resiliency among at-risk students, because it helps promote their self-esteem (McMillan and Reed, 1994). The growing literature on undocumented youths' mobilization seeks to fill the previous void on the undocumented immigrant student population, who has only recently emerged as a political actor on the U.S. scene (Dozier, 1993; Gonzales, 2010; Pérez, 2012). While the majority of doctoral work has focused on the educational experiences of undocumented youths, either in the K-12 system or in higher education, a few recent studies have investigated access to healthcare (Balderas, 2013), and civic and political engagement (Chen, 2013; Quiroz-Becerra, 2013).

Undocumented students often live on the margin of U.S. society, and face many difficulties in tasks that would seem casual to anybody else, such as driving, or going to the doctor's office, which keeps them from participating fully in political activities (Abrego, 2006; Chavez, 1998; Gonzáles, 2010, 2011; Menjívar, 2006; Rumbaut and Komaie, 2010; Seif, 2008). Undocumented youth educated in the U.S. are in an ambiguous situation that is different from other unauthorized migrants, since they have acquired U.S. habits and aspirations, but are kept away from society by clear legal limitation once they graduate (Abrego, 2008; 2011; Gonzales, 2011; Menjívar and Abrego, 2009; Seif, 2006). The boundary that separates them from the

mainstream is thus blurred (Alba, 2005). The “early political incorporation” of unauthorized migrants, that is to say their first membership experience in the U.S. (Hochschild and Mollenkopf, 2009) is one that is characterized by exclusion and precariousness.

Political incorporation is a difficult process of undocumented immigrant youths. Some researchers have postulated that only for those who have legal status can there be political assimilation (Hochschild and Mollenkopf, 2009). Indeed, discrimination and lack of membership constitute major determinants of slow incorporation (Bean et al., 2011). Lopez and Marcelo (2008) note that even if immigrant youths appear to be less civically engaged than native-born youth, this difference is partly explained by factors such as socio-economic status rather than nativity status. The age at the time of immigration and individuals’ country of origin may also impact their ability and willingness to become civically engaged (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). Yet some undocumented youths have managed to become actors involved in the immigration reform process, and have obtained positive outcomes such as the adoption of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals in June 2012 (Office of the Press Secretary, 2012). In California, Seif (2008) investigated the growing movement of undocumented women activists.

Over the last decade, undocumented youths have been mobilizing around the DREAM Act and made claims of greater belonging in the United States (Benjamin-Alvarado et al., 2008; Flanagan and Levine, 2010; Gonzáles, 2008; Pérez, 2012). This means that, contrary to what the literature on political incorporation usually finds, undocumented youths manage to develop complex identities and to become more engaged when faced with discrimination (Levi and Stoker, 2000; Lopez, 2010; Moore, 1978; Pérez et al., 2010; Stepick and Stepick, 2002). In fact, resorting to *activism* presents a unique opportunity for political growth, especially for groups whose interest and needs are ignored by traditional organizations (Flanagan and Levine,

2010). Undocumented youths are also highly involved in non-electoral form of civic engagement, such as activism, tutoring, and volunteering (Perez et al., 2010). Youths' civic participation levels usually tend to be delayed, except for activities such as volunteering and global activism (Flanagan and Levin, 2010). The movement has been able to make use of new technologies available, such as the internet and social networks, which are particularly well-suited for organizing weak ties and maintaining social capital among groups with low socio-economic status (Benjamin-Alvarado et al., 2008; Gustafsson, 2010).

Therefore it seems that political inclusion is possible for undocumented youth through their inclusion in various avenues like education. Access to the latter depends largely on differences in state laws regarding eligibility for in-state tuition and financial aid. If participation in higher education is an "avenue" for inclusion and can provide the resources necessary for greater political incorporation, then it is necessary to know how well undocumented immigrants are doing in higher education and the type of resources which it can provide for them.

### **Undocumented immigrants and higher education**

Research has shown that policies adopted by the host society can alter the assimilation process of immigrant groups (Brettell, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). State laws granting access to in-state tuition for some undocumented youths were adopted in order to increase the level of participation in institutions of higher education of a particularly marginalized group. Most of the beneficiaries of these policies are part of what is called the "1.5 generation," meaning they are technically part of the first generation of immigrants because they were born abroad, but are closer to the second generation through their lifestyle, aspirations, and levels of integration. Even though a college degree gives its holder an advantage on the labor market, access and resilience in college has been very difficult for undocumented youths.

*Barriers to higher education*

Undocumented youth face specific challenges when the time comes for them and their peers to apply for college. The first major challenge that these students face is due to the costs of obtaining a college education while being ineligible for federal financial aid, and state financial aid and in-state tuition in most states. The availability of state support for tuition and financial aid can be a factor in high school graduation rates – since they can improve students’ levels of motivation (Lopez, 2009: 16) – but also in college persistence once the students are enrolled in higher education (Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, 2001; 2002; Corrigan, 2003). This is all the more important as Hispanic immigrants have the highest dropout rates for high school students and college undergraduates (Erisman and Looney, 2007).

The price of a college education has soared over the last few years. The total costs of obtaining a bachelor’s degree from a four-year public institution has increased more rapidly between 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 than during either of the two previous decades (College Board, 2013). Undocumented students aspire to attend college but are often worried about how to pay for their education. Financial aid – or the availability of financial aid – plays a large role in the transition to college and students’ choice of attending either a two-year or a four-year college (Mehta and Ali, 2003; Oliverez, 2006; Perez and Malagon, 2007). Undocumented youths may therefore have to work more to pay for college, and may have more family responsibilities (Gonzales, 2011; Mehta and Ali, 2003; Stepick and Stepick, 2002; Sy and Romero, 2008). These circumstances combine with a generally greater financial needs and a lack of preparation for college due to the type of schools that these youths tend to attend (Rouse, 2004). Undocumented immigrant youth are therefore at-risk in terms of college enrollment and persistence.

The second challenge that these students face is related to their characteristics as immigrants. The very experience of immigration and otherness within the United States can have an impact on the college experience of immigrant students and their transition to adulthood (Chavez et al., 2007; Gonzales, 2011; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Rumbaut and Komaie, 2010). Adolescents from immigrant families sometimes outperform their native-born peers in high school and college, due to factors such as optimism and high aspirations for education (Fuligni, 1997; Kao and Tienda, 1995; Reitz and Zhang, 2011; C. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995). However, the particular situation of undocumented youths compared to documented migrants often leads the former to experience loneliness and depression due to a self-imposed isolation from public spaces and from school personnel like teachers and college advisors (Abrego, 2011; Dozier, 1992; Gonzales, 2010, 2011; Hagan et al. 2010; Madera et al., 2008; Pérez et al., 2009). Immigrant families also tend to experience extended periods of separation and later reunification with their relatives abroad, a situation which can lead to both anxiety and depression symptoms in immigrant children (Chaudry et al., 2010; Chavez, 1998; Dreby, 2009, 2010; Menjívar and Abrego, 2009; Ngai, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, Bang and Kim, 2011). Immigrants from lower-income groups, among whom most undocumented families are, also tend to require longer periods of psychological adjustment to their new environment (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

Finally, most undocumented students are also disadvantaged compared to their peers because of the lack of parental support for college. This does not mean that undocumented and other immigrant parents do not wish their children to pursue higher education. On the contrary, research has shown that immigrant families care about school but they may not have the resources or the skills necessary to help their children in their transition to college (Takanishi, 2004). This is especially the case for parents who are themselves undocumented. Immigrants

coming from Latin America and the Caribbean have the lowest levels of education among all immigrants (Erisman and Looney, 2007). Parents with lower levels of education are unfamiliar with the U.S. educational and university system, and often do not understand the importance of early tracking for college applications (Conchas and Clark, 2002). Immigrant parents are also unequally equipped to deal with the expectations of schools in terms of parental involvement and college preparation (Chavez et al., 2007; Karoly and Gonzalez, 2011; Lareau, 1987). They may have difficulties communicating with their children's schools and educators, which may make them feel alienated from the school community (Diaz-Strong and Meiners, 2007; Gándara and Chávez, 2003; Hirokazu, 2011; Oliverez, 2006; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008; Telles and Ortiz, 2008).

On the other hand, parents who have gained greater economic and political incorporation, have higher levels of education and greater English proficiency tend to have children who experience greater educational gains and political awareness (Bean, Brown, and Rumbaut, 2006; Conger, Schwartz, and Stiefel, 2011; Flanagan and Levine, 2010; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman, 2003). Immigrant families' cultural capital can be used to explain the variety of high school experiences of children who come from families with low socio-economic status, which may hinder their parents' actual high expectations for their children (Gándara, 1995). The characteristics of immigrant parents, along with the policies in place in each state, can therefore constitute tremendous barriers to the access of undocumented youths' to college. For those who actually manage to gain access to higher education, other factors come into play which may affect their ability to stay enrolled and graduate on time.



### *Resilience in higher education*

A persistent issue for undocumented youths in higher education is their level of resilience once they are enrolled. There are many barriers to young immigrants' success in higher education, including work and family responsibilities, financial need, lack of academic preparation, and limited English proficiency (Camacho Liu, 2011; Erisman and Looney, 2007). Latino youth fare comparatively worse in education than other groups, with higher dropout rates despite increases in college graduation rates (Rumbaut and Komaie, 2010). In 2002, Lowell and Suro stated that the educational profile of Latino immigrants had improved greatly since the 1970s, and that they would soon catch up with the native-born population since the latter had little room for improvement (2002: 2). At the same time however, Gándara and Chávez (2003) noted that Latinos were still underrepresented in higher education in California, and pointed to the responsibility of public policies, such as the abandonment of affirmative action, which could worsen that situation. There are educational differences between recent immigrants and members of the second or third generation. However, in a 2009 report for the Pew Hispanic Center, Lopez showed that it was the educational gap between native-born Latinos and foreign-born Latinos which largely explained why Hispanics *still* lagged in educational attainment compared to the rest of the US population (2009: 2).

The differences between immigrants of separate generations, as well as between immigrants of various statuses, are also apparent in the type of institutions they usually attend. Second-generation Latinos are more likely to be enrolled in 4-year institutions than those of the first or the third generation (Baum and Flores, 2011). More recently, Conger and Chellman (2011) have showed that undocumented students fare relatively well in 2-year degree programs, but have a lower probability of graduating in 4 or 6 years than U.S. citizens. Bean et al. (2006) have emphasized how parents' status is related to educational success, particularly finishing

college, which is an issue for undocumented youths (Rumbaut and Komaie, 2010). This trend could be related to the fact that there are few role models for undocumented students, who tend to come from low-income families and be the first generation to attend college (De Leon, 2005; Dozier, 1995; Duke et al., 2009; Flanagan et al., 2003; Flanagan and Gallay, 2008; Gonzales, 2010; Jauregui et al., 2008; Karunanayake and Nauta, 2004; Stanton-Salazar and Dornbusch, 1995). ()

Perez et al. (2009) highlight the importance of social capital and networks formed among friends or between students to promote assimilation. This process can also be reinforced by the adults they encounter, either in their community (Munoz, 2008; Tillie, 2004) or at school (Greenman, 2011). The creation and maintenance of networks in college fosters greater educational success and direct students' choice of institutions of higher education (Pérez and McDonough, 2008). Institutional fit as affected by social life is also a factor for preventing dropout among immigrant youths (Bean, 1985; Garza and Landeck, 2004). Thus there are various barriers in place which prevent Latino immigrant youths from gaining access to college, and for those who do, from staying in college and graduating. This creates a wide disparity between them and other youths in the United States, due to the benefits conferred to college graduates on the labor market.

### *Gains from access to higher education*

Graduating from college confers tremendous benefits to individuals. Research has shown the direct link between education and income (Card, 1999; Gonzales, 2007; Schultz, 1961; Witmer, 1970), as well as between education and the transmission of human capital (Becker, 1964; Black, Devereux, Salvanes, 2005; Grawe, 2008; Haveman and Smeeding, 2006). Recent reports on the costs of *not* attending college shows the many advantages of college graduates

on the labor market (Taylor, Fry and Oates, 2014). There are direct and indirect benefits associated with a college degree (Frum, 2007). For example, 80 percent of male college graduates earn more than the median earnings of high school graduates (Baum, Ma, and Payea, 2010). There are other indirect advantages gained by federal, state and local governments, who can collect direct financial returns in the form of higher taxes from their investments in postsecondary education (ibid, 10). Society in general gains individuals who display greater engagement in their community, in the form of more volunteering and more voting, especially among young voters.

Access to in-state tuition is an essential step for undocumented immigrants to gain access to college, and thus to have a chance to enjoy the same life benefits as others. There is evidence that policies relative to higher education affect the behavior of students who are still in the secondary education system, as well as their choices on enrollment. A recent study by Potochnick (2010) shows that accommodating policies may reduce the high-school dropout rates for the undocumented. These policies affecting higher education send a signal to students and educators in the K-12 system (Domina, 2007; Gándara and Chávez, 2003; Kirst and Venezia, 2001). The adoption of accommodating policy is often followed by increases in enrollment for Latino students, as evidenced by recent research (Dickson and Pender, 2010; Flores, 2010; Kaushal, 2008; Mehlman-Orozco, 2011). Another study from Flores and Chapa (2009) shows that students who benefit from more accommodating policies have similar retention rates in college as U.S.-citizen or resident Latino peers. The connection between education and upward mobility is well-known in American society, including by undocumented youths who believe in the U.S.'s promise of establishing a meritocracy (Abrego, 2006; 2008).

Access to higher education can therefore confer many benefits to immigrant youths, but also to society as a whole. Direct benefits occur in the form of higher wages on the labor

market and higher tax returns for government. Indirect benefits can be reaped by society when these policies provide immigrant youths with the necessary skills and resources to be more engaged in their community.

### **Education and engagement**

In 1982, the Supreme Court guaranteed undocumented children access to public schools in the K-12 system in its *Plyler v. Doe* decision. Part of the rationale behind this decision was that access to school would allow undocumented children to become productive members of society, and to avoid the creation of a marginalized underclass. However, it is important to note that the improvements gained by attending school were meant to be economic, social and *political*. Policies which ease access to college are the logical follow-up to the 1982 decision, and should therefore be studied from a civic and political mobilization perspective.

#### *Education-related resources and recruitment*

Participation in institutions of higher education can provide many resources for immigrant youths to participate in civic and political endeavors. One of the central roles of public school is to bring about the civic development of undocumented students and their *parents*, because they provide the opportunity to practice the skills of civic engagement, such as participation in community project and increasing one's social network (Rogers et al., 2008). Civic engagement is also built through participation in extra-curricular activities, which has been noted to increase belonging and self-esteem, and to increase personal network among youths (McMillan and Reed, 1994). This is all the more important as the mobility of migrant children, especially the undocumented, tends to limit the educational opportunities they can benefit from, as well as the social networks in which they could otherwise become integrated (Green, 2003). Since schools

provide the majority of adolescents' opportunities for social interaction, inter-group contacts that facilitate assimilation take place more frequently within schools and universities than in other social contexts (Alba and Nee, 2003; Greenman, 2011).

Research has shown the relationship between educational progress and civic engagement for young adults (Finlay and Flanagan, 2009; Lopez et al., 2006). Early models of civic engagement and political participation relied on the socio-economic status of individuals, and established that income and education were the principal predictors of activity (Verba and Nie, 1972). This model was later supplemented by the addition of individuals' sense of political efficacy, understood as "a sense of personal competence in one's ability to understand politics and to participate in politics, as well as a sense that one's political activities can influence what the government actually does" (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993: 15). Other inquiries into participation have established resources, recruitment, and political orientation as the main factors of participation (Burns, Schlozman and Verba, 2001). As has been noted, college attendance provides individuals with better knowledge about their relationship with the government, and can thus increase one's sense of political efficacy. Following these studies, the Civic Voluntarism Model was introduced, according to which political participation is based on knowledge, money, and time (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995).

This is all the more important when looking at the civic and political endeavors of Latino immigrant college students, who are more likely than others to have to work to pay for college, and to attend college part-time, thus reducing the time available for other activities (Erisman and Looney, 2007). A formal education helps determine democratic political behavior and attitudes (Nie et al., 1996). Finally, Kesler and Bloemraad more recently noted that "being married, older, more educated and in a higher income bracket" tends to foster trust in others among people (2010: 331). Higher levels of trust encourage individuals to become more

engaged in their community, and therefore make them more likely to belong to an organization, and to engage in political actions. Latino immigrant youths are also part of a group which tends to display lower levels of political activity compared to the rest of the population. Younger people tend to be less informed than older cohorts and to have a more individualistic view of politics (Putnam, 2000). Significant proportions of American youths are disengaged from civic and political activities, while specific groups like Latinos tend to engage primarily in protest politics (Flanagan and Levine, 2010; Lopez et al., 2006). Voting registration and turnout were lowest in 2008 among the young (Schlozman et al., 2012). Youth from ethnic minority backgrounds are also less likely to trust elected officials or the government (Flanagan and Galloway, 2008).

College attendance can therefore provide some of the resources that individuals need to be able to participate in civic and political endeavors, such as money, political knowledge, and efficacy. Attendance brings young Latino immigrants in contact with members from other groups, which they may not have had the opportunity to due to the high levels of segregation in the K-12 system (Cutler, Glaeser, and Vigdor, 2008). According to Lake and Huckfeldt (1998), education is important for civic and political participation of individuals, not just because it gives them the skills to participate, but also because it puts them in contact with other educated individuals and helps them build more social capital (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1993). The creation of networks promotes the practice of civic engagement (Biren et al., 2009; Flanagan et al., 2007).

Individuals' involvement with solidarity and conservation groups education is strongly related to their educational experience, while their political involvement tends to be associated with strong family and community connections (Duke et al., 2009; Flanagan and Levine, 2010). College attendance thus can increase the level of social capital of Latino immigrant youths,

who may otherwise suffer from imposed or voluntary segregation. Putnam (2000) establishes a distinction between bridging and bonding social capital. The former brings people new perspectives and information, while the latter provides emotional support and would be particularly helpful for youths suffering from disadvantageous policies. As has been noted in previous research, social capital, including civic engagement and individuals' ties to their friends and neighbors, is connected to physical health and subjective well-being (Helliwell and Putnam, 2004).

Pacheco and Plutzer (2008) have showed that enrollment in college raises participation rates, especially for youths from disadvantaged backgrounds who tend to experience the cumulative effects of low levels of parental education, income and who reside in difficult neighborhoods. As mentioned above, Latino immigrant youths have parents who are less likely than others to be able to support them in their transition to college. Yet as the literature has shown, politically active parents leave a legacy of political involvement to their children by exposure to politics, and children of active parents tend to be active themselves (Verba, Burns and Schlozman, 2003). Public policies which help young immigrants, especially the undocumented, gain access to college can thus help compensate for some features of their backgrounds, and provide the necessary resources for civic and political engagement.

### *The workplace as alternative site*

Schools and colleges are not the only places where individuals can gain the necessary resources for participation, or where they can be recruited for civic and political activities. In fact, the role of schools as socializing and equalizing institutions has been questioned by market-oriented policies (Flanagan et al., 2003). This study is based on college access as a source of greater group empowerment, and civic and political engagement. However, this

should not be construed to mean that institutions of higher education are the only locale where these skills and ties can be found. In fact, the workplace and work-related organizations can constitute an alternative locus of assimilation and political recruitment (Cook, 2013).

Jarvis, Montoya and Mulvoy (2005) demonstrated that young workers have lower levels of political socialization and civic skills, group membership and mobilization opportunities than college students. However, the workplace is a location where weak ties are likely to be formed since work is a primary place of interaction for most adults, and is a place of exposure to different political discourse (Gidengil and Stolle, 2009). Yet this is especially the for upper-status employees (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995; Hodson, 2004; Mutz and Mondak, 2006). Those who rely exclusively on the workplace for civic resources may be at a disadvantage. College-educated youths are more civically engaged than those who do not attend college (Flanagan and Levine, 2010). Institutions of higher education have specific elements which foster civic engagement, even though this may depend on the type of institution (Kiesa et al., 2007). Unlike the workplace, colleges offer a diverse student body and therefore the potential for inter-group dialogue, organized volunteering, partnerships with community organizations, political discussions and debates on campus, as well as study-abroad opportunities (Biren et al., 2009; Flanagan et al., 2007; Galston, 2001).

In the past, non-college bound youths had alternative sites for civic learning and recruitment, such as unions, religious services, and newspapers, but these forms of engagement have declined. One of those, church attendance, is nevertheless still connected with greater levels of volunteering (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2005). School and work constitute the two main institutions which affect the life trajectories of individuals, and they have been noted to be two domains in which immigrants have gained some protections from the courts (Gonzales and Gleeson, 2012; Fisk, Cooper and Wishnie, 2005; Olivas, 2005).



Access to college constitutes an essential step in the civic and political engagement of young Latino immigrants. Higher levels of education promote participation, which is especially important when considering the challenges the group faces in terms of political engagement.

### **Immigrant political incorporation in the New York City metropolitan area**

This research project is a study of the sense of belonging and mobilization processes of immigrant youths in the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey. Locally-based studies of assimilation have already been conducted, either across various locales (Massey and Sánchez, 2010), but also in New Jersey suburbs (Aptekar, 2008), and these studies gave some support to segmented assimilation theories. Research on immigrant integration in the City of New York has relied mostly on investigations of the second generation (Kasinitz et al., 2008) and on the political incorporation of immigrants (Gerstle and Mollenkopf, 2001). In this particular geographic area, research specifically targeting undocumented youth dates back to the mid-1990s (Dozier, 1992, 1995). That study focused on undocumented students, and took place at a time when the immigrant cohort was very different in terms of national origin.

Yet one needs to be careful when using New York City as a locale for immigrant incorporation. The city is a particular place in the United States in terms of immigration due to its long history as a port of entry. About 36 percent of the population of the city today is foreign-born (American Community Survey, 2008). The immigrant population of New York City is incredibly diverse, and no country dominates the foreign-born population (Foner, 2013). Unlike in other large cities in the United States, Mexicans are not the largest immigrant group, and only constitute about 4 percent of the city's total population (Smith, 2006; 2013). Undocumented immigrants there do not face as much stigma and resentment as they do in other

parts of the country due to the facts that many of them have arrived with a visa and have simply overstayed, and because the government of the city has ensured access to education and healthcare (Foner, 2013; Kasinitz et al., 2008). Additionally, over half of children in New York City schools come from immigrant homes, which may normalize the immigrant experience for the host society (Suárez-Orozco, C. Suárez-Orozco, and Sattin-Bajaj, 2010).

As such, asking whether greater access to higher education has an expected positive impact on the experiences and mobilization of undocumented immigrants in New York City may constitute a “best case” scenario. If it does not have this impact in New York City, it is much less likely to do so in more hostile contexts of reception. In addition, Kasinitz et al. (2002) have also showed that in this particular context, theories of assimilation may be too limited to “capture the complexity of the ways in which [immigrants] are becoming ‘New Yorkers’” (2002: 1022). Indeed, their research showed that New York City may be a particular place in terms of integration and assimilation because immigrants there may identify with neither their country of origin nor with the United States, but with the city itself. They posit New York City as a “new model of creative multiculturalism and inclusion” (2002: 1034).

Nevertheless, what this research project seeks to display is the point of view of undocumented immigrants themselves, and how college access – or lack thereof – has affected their lives and sense of belonging. Due to the obvious methodological challenges in conducting research with this segment of the population, the literature has little to offer in terms of attitude towards government and the host country on the part of unauthorized immigrants and of students among them. This dissertation intends to fill this gap.

## **Immigrants and contexts of reception**

The current debate on the DREAM Act shows the forces pushing against the participation of unauthorized immigrants into higher education and in the creation of accommodating policies. These forces include groups which oppose immigration reform, but also certain state-level elected officials seeking to prevent access to higher education, either by barring undocumented students of public institutions of higher education, or by restricting access to in-state tuition and state financial aid. Hence it is necessary to approach immigrant political incorporation from a public policy perspective, by including the design and implementation of policies as forces which can shape the experience and mobilization of young immigrants, especially the undocumented.

### *Policies and assimilation*

The literature on immigrant incorporation has also focused on the types of contexts which public policies create in host countries. These policies determine the type of rights which immigrants can claim (Bosniak, 2006). As a consequence, policies and their interpretation place restrictions on the activities of immigrants, and thus limit their experiences of the rights which they have claimed (Coutin, 1993). State policies regarding access to higher education significantly alter the context of reception in which immigrants, and especially undocumented immigrants grow up. Yet these state laws cannot be understood as an actual state program intending to assimilate undocumented immigrants into American society by imposing values regarding education. Alba and Nee (1997, 2003) clearly demonstrate that assimilation can no longer be understood in its past “normative or ideological applications” (1997: 827). On the contrary, they define assimilation as a spontaneous social process which occurs through the interaction of majority and minority groups. They have gone further in defining socioeconomic

assimilation as the attainment of above-average socioeconomic standing (usually seen as social mobility), but also as the participation of minorities in institutions such as higher education “on the basis of parity with native groups of similar backgrounds” (1997: 836). Interestingly, Alba and Nee note that this second understanding of socioeconomic assimilation supposes equality of treatment and of chances in the pursuit of higher education. Equality of opportunity is a fundamental principle of American political culture, and it is therefore a central concept of the political incorporation of immigrants in the United States.

### *Effects of public policies*

The federal system in the United States is the source of various inequalities of treatment (Peters, 2013). This is the case for groups such as felons, recipients of unemployment benefits, but also for undocumented immigrants. Inequalities stem from state innovations, from the variations in the implementation of federally mandated services, and from bureaucratic discretion (Stone, 2001; Lipsky, 1980; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). The children of immigrants tend to be disproportionately represented among the poor, and due to the absence of a national child and family policy in the United States, they are heavily dependent on state policies and state implementation of national programs like Medicaid (Takanishi, 2004). These large variations in treatment are fundamentally inconsistent with the core American value of equal opportunity for all. Some immigrants, even those who are undocumented, do benefit from the decentralization of the system, but as Marrow (2009) points out, this is often due to “extremely serviced-oriented individuals working within or at [the] margins [of their institutions]” (2009: 765). Immigration status more often than not is a cause for restrictions on access to certain rights and services, which leads to disparities in behavior and attitudes among immigrants. In one study, the perception of greater opportunities in the U.S. compared to one’s

home country was slightly greater among documented migrants than among the undocumented. Documented immigrants tend to see greater opportunity in the United States than the undocumented (Massey and Sánchez, 2010). These opportunities are largely shaped by the policies in place in each state.

Policies adopted by host societies have multiple effects on immigrants and their families. Immigrants are primarily affected by changes in immigration legislation itself, but other policies have an effect on them: settlement and integration programs, regulation of inter-groups relations, employment, housing, and multiculturalism initiatives (Reitz, 2002). In addition, immigrant incorporation is largely impacted by government programs which regulate important sectors of society, such as labor markets, education, or the welfare state. However as DeWind and Kasinitz note, as most of the literature about incorporation and integration theory is based on the experiences of the second generation (Bean et al., 2011), little is known about the way these experiences change as immigrant youth face various political, structural and social changes in the United States. Because of changing policies and contexts, immigrant youths' "ideas about their own identity and place in American society will undoubtedly shift in ways we cannot yet possibly predict" (1997: 1098). The adoption of state laws which increase or decrease the chances that undocumented immigrants will go to college (Flores and Chapa, 2009; Jauregui et al., 2008) certainly qualifies as one of these political and social developments that could change these youths' view of themselves as participating subjects of American society. In fact, a study of immigrant political incorporation in Canada showed that political participation among immigrants was higher there than in the United States, and was attributed to the "Canadian immigrant settlement industry" which is partly made up of government programs assisting immigrants in various institutional contexts (Bloemraad, 2006).

The overall perception of immigrants in the United States, especially by higher-status individuals, can have a great psychological impact on immigrant youths at a time when they are building their own identity (Yeung and Martin, 2003). Policies which restrict access to higher education for undocumented youths encourage a negative perception of these immigrants as criminals. These negative perceptions of immigrants which are held by members of the dominant culture can create painful context of socialization for immigrant youths and affect their ability and willingness to participate in the political process (Morales et al., 2011).

The literature has also showed that policy design can have an effect on the civic and political engagement of policy recipients (Campbell, 2003; Mettler, 2002; Newton, 2008). Government programs can have beneficial and negative effects on those affected by policy, either because of the content of the program, or because of who is targeted – or excluded – by the program. Receiving benefits from government creates a link between institutions and beneficiaries, and provides them with an entry into the political arena. For example, government programs which provide subsidies to farmers can elevate their “sense of the personal relevance of politics” and thus encourage them to vote more than other groups (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). As has also been noted, beneficiaries of non-means-tested programs tend to get more involved in related issues than beneficiaries of means-tested programs (Mettler, 2002; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012). The design of the policy and the groups who are targeted for services or for exclusion therefore play a role in promoting or hindering participation. The works of Schattschneider and Lowi (1964) have showed that “policies create politics,” and that policies institute particular norms and rules on recipients and in their relationship to government. Policies send messages to recipients in regards to their rights, their privileges, their place in society, but also their duties and obligations to the larger community. In that sense, policies are connected to the political participation of beneficiaries

and non-beneficiaries. Policies can alienate groups labeled “undeserving,” contribute to political apathy and discourage active citizenship (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Policy design can be interpreted by recipients as well as by those who are excluded from certain rights, and provide the basis for public interpretation of certain groups’ level of deservedness. Policies promote a particular public image of policy recipients and non-recipients that relates to their deservedness and their ability to make claims on public goods.

This project seeks to investigate the nature of messages which are sent to immigrant youths, and undocumented youths in particular, by public policies which affect access to higher education at the state level. These policies affect not only the type of resources which will be available to them for civic and political engagement, but also the image of the immigrant community as perceived by the general public in the United States.

### *States redefining the meaning of citizenship*

The impact of these laws on undocumented immigrant youths also raises questions about traditional conceptions of citizenship. Constitutionally, only the federal government can grant citizenship (US Constitution, Article I, Section 8). Throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century however, states continued to establish legislation that would prevent certain groups from immigrating into their jurisdiction (Ngai, 2004). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Supreme Court established that Congress had full powers over immigration law (Aleinikoff, 1989; Legomsky, 1984), and that states could not control the flow of immigrants. Nevertheless, in the 1976 *De Canas v. Bica* decision, the Supreme Court also stated that states could regulate the activities of immigrants living within their jurisdiction, especially in terms of access to the labor market. In parallel, many scholars have commented on what Nicholas de Genova calls the “racialized history of the law of citizenship” (2006: 78). The history of citizenship in the United

States is marked by struggles on the part of minorities to gain access to citizenships (Flores, 2003). This raises the question of the treatment of undocumented immigrants under federal law, but also under state law, and the response by immigrants in the form of mobilization in favor of reform.

Over the last ten years, there has been an increase in state activity relative to immigrants (Filindra and Kovács, 2012; Newton and Adams, 2009). With the adoption of laws which increase access to higher education in order to improve non-citizens' lives in the country, many states are participating in the elaboration of a new form of citizenship, one that is based on the exchanges between government and immigrants, and on the efforts of a marginalized group to gain recognition as political subjects. Through the implementation of state laws increasing undocumented youths' access to higher education, these immigrants are no longer simply the targets of the law, they are made active subjects of their own lives through higher education. The large student mobilization surrounding Congress' consideration of the DREAM Act shows that the content of the legislation (whether passed or as a bill) has a direct impact on undocumented students' college experience in the U.S. (Gonzales, 2007; Morales et al., 2011).

It is nevertheless important to note that this new conception of belonging and citizenship is focusing on higher education as a path to citizenship. The United States already has a tradition of granting citizenship to aliens for services in the armed forces (Rocco, 2006). These new state laws, along with the DREAM Act bill and comprehensive immigration reform being debated in Congress, show that higher education is now considered as another equal path to promote citizenship. This gives citizenship an entirely different substance, and changes the relationship between immigrants and the state.

This dissertation seeks to address the issue of political incorporation for undocumented youths, and to investigate the multiple strategies for incorporation associated with different



contexts of reception. The experiences of undocumented youths today challenge the traditional understandings of processes of assimilation, political incorporation and policy design. This project merges these approaches together in order to highlight the unique development of undocumented youth as actors on the American political scene.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### **The challenges of studying undocumented immigrants**

Undocumented youths constitute a doubly vulnerable population. First, undocumented immigrants make up a *hidden* population, meaning that some of their characteristics expose them to stigma, ostracism, and potentially to prosecution (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). As a consequence, research methods for studying the undocumented require a tailored approach. Second, young respondents in any study are often still in the process of establishing their own identities, a process which is affected by the environment which both their families and the government create for them (Gonzales, 2011). Research focusing on unauthorized immigrants necessarily calls for an in-depth investigation. Most of the issues studied in connection with immigrants will be affected by the characteristics of the subject population, such as origin, occupation, residential pattern, and education. Immigration status will constitute another significant level of understanding. Finally, considering the fact that large numbers of unauthorized immigrants live in families made up of other, authorized immigrants and U.S.-born citizens, any study focusing on the undocumented is relevant to the rest of the population as well.

The current study relies on an innovative mixed-methods approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Even though the analyses which follow are primarily based on qualitative data collected from sixty interviews with undocumented youths, an effort has been made to collect quantitative data from over 230 Latino immigrant youths living in the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey, by using new technologies made

available to researchers. This part of the project was inspired by recent endeavors in the literature, but also by the tools which young undocumented themselves immigrants are using, especially those involved in the undocumented students' movement (Okamoto and Ebert, 2010; Pérez, 2012; Waechter et al., 2010). The project thus relies on an online survey of Latino immigrant youths – both documented and undocumented – as well as on interviews of undocumented respondents to study their levels of belonging in a more in-depth manner. There are advantages and weaknesses to each of these methods, and therefore several challenges needed to be addressed – especially reliability, validity, and representativeness. In addition to documenting levels of belonging and political participation among Latino immigrant youths and undocumented youths, the project adds to the debate on the methodology of the study of immigrants in the United States, and provides insights based on experience to future researchers in the field.

### **Previous field work and data collection involving undocumented immigrants**

Many studies have investigated the experiences of undocumented youths and students in the United States, and this dissertation both builds on their findings and provides additional, previously uncovered data. Most of these studies used qualitative data collected through interviews and observation or participant-observation. Leisy Abrego (2008) conducted interviews with undocumented youths to measure the effects of AB 540, the California statute which allowed some of these youths to qualify for in-state tuition. One study was conducted in 2005 in the Chicago region by Daysi Diaz-Strong and Erica Meiners, and involved 12 self-identified Latino students already enrolled in high school or college (Diaz-Strong and Meiners, 2007). All of the college students in the study received in-state tuition as per the law adopted by

Illinois in 2003. This study relied on semi-structure interviews focusing the daily lives and experiences of these students, who were recruited in a convenience sampling method or through word of mouth. Data collection for the project was based on “ethnographic longitudinality” and therefore also involved participant observation in events and community-based organizations across Chicago. Diaz-Strong and Meiners pursued a larger research project and collected additional data between 2007 and 2010, also in the Chicago region. This time, they and additional researchers interviewed 40 currently and formerly undocumented youths in order to collect information regarding their educational experiences, but also their relationship to a U.S. identity. They also used a snowball sample, and relied on respondents who self-identified in order to participate.

Another study was conducted in the Chicago area by Mehta and Ali (2003). The project focused on the experiences of immigrant youths in gaining access to higher education, and specifically focused on the financial aspect of going and staying in college. The study was based on over 600 surveys of first and second-generation immigrants, which were administered by community-based organizations. From these studies it appears that the means of contacting potential respondents is one of the key aspects in designing a study of Latino immigrant youths. Using community-based organizations, Mehta and Ali (2003) were able to take into account the sensitive nature of the study, while creating a sample that was representative of the Chicago immigrant population. For the same reasons, this dissertation based in New York and New Jersey used immigrant and community-based organizations as intermediaries for the distribution of the survey.

Other studies were conducted in California, more particularly in the Los Angeles area where it is estimated that one million undocumented immigrants live. California is the state with the largest share of the unauthorized immigrants in the U.S., in spite of the recent decline

in the overall undocumented population (Gonzales, 2010; Passel and Cohn, 2009; Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Data collection was conducted by Leisy Abrego between 2001 and 2006, who interviewed 24 high school and college Latino immigrant students in Los Angeles, and compared this data with that collected through interviews with U.S.-born Latino children of immigrants and legal immigrant children. She also collected data through participant observations in community meetings and events. Two other studies were carried out by Roberto Gonzales, one in Los Angeles between 2004 and 2007 (Gonzales, 2010), and one in the Seattle area which began in 2010 (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010). These studies follow similar methods, and are based on ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews, and individual life history-interviews with 1.5 generation and U.S.-born second-generation young Latinos. The Seattle study differed slightly due to the addition of Asian American young adults into the sample. In Los Angeles, Gonzales was careful to include in his sample both college-educated and non college-bound young adults, since he and Abrego (2010) point out that what is missing in the literature on undocumented youth is precisely information on the vast majority who does not gain entry to college or never completes high school.

Another study by Perez and Malagon (2007) used interviews with six college students in California, and focused on factors helping or hindering their transition to college, mainly their levels of social support, the financial aid, and their campus climate. A project set up by Patricia Pérez (2010) looked at factors influencing college choice and retention issues. The author interviewed 14 participants, all undocumented Latino youths, half of whom attended a community college and the other half a public university. She also used a questionnaire to collect demographic data. Finally, a two-year study was conducted by William Pérez out of Claremont University in California. The study yielded both quantitative and qualitative data, and relied on a survey and in-depth semi-structured interviews regarding academic

achievement, civic engagement, but also addressed beliefs and values as well as distress levels and family background (Pérez, 2011; 2012; Pérez et al., 2010). The study was primarily advertised through an online survey across the entire country, using student organizations and high school and college campuses as intermediaries. Participants were asked to share the recruitment flyers with other undocumented students they knew. They were also invited to participate in interviews and to contact the researchers by email or by phone after completing their online survey. Online surveys provide several advantages, which will be discussed below. Pérez focused primarily on students from community colleges, whereas this project includes students from several types of institutions of higher education, along with youths not in college.

Additionally, other studies were conducted in the Southwest of the United States, where the presence of Latino immigrants has increased over the last twenty years. For example, a study was led in Texas by Perry (2006), who focused on the multiple meanings of membership and substantive citizenship. The author interviewed 21 undocumented students for the project, along with 17 legislators and policymakers from the Texas State government. What these studies highlight is the importance of creating a diverse sample. Because the project seeks to investigate civic engagement and political participation, it is important to include interviewees who are involved in the undocumented students' movement, but also others who are not involved in DREAM Act-type of policies, either because they choose not to be involved, or because they prefer to be involved in non-immigration related issues.

Research on undocumented immigrants is not solely concentrated in large immigration states such as California, Texas or Illinois. One study was conducted in the Midwest of the United States, which provides a seldom-found location in the literature on undocumented immigration, despite the adoption several years ago of in-state tuition for undocumented students by states such as Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma (Morales, Herrera and Murry,

2011). For this study, researchers from Kansas State University used a variety of approaches to obtain insights into the experiences of undocumented youths: open-ended surveys, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and reviews of documents that established the context of the study. One specific element of the study, which was used in others as well, was that those individuals who chose to participate were “asked to contact the researchers in the way he or she preferred to initiate the discussion” (2011: 272). This helped increase the level of comfort of the participants in the study, but it also provided a context in which participants were viewed as subjects making a decision for themselves rather than remain objects of study passively identified by the researcher.

While most of these studies relied on an ethnographic approach to the undocumented, some researchers have use existing quantitative data to make inferences about the experiences of undocumented immigrants. This was the case in the study on the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles, which relied on random-digit dialing in areas where immigrants where concentrated, in combination with lists of common surnames for specific groups in order to gather data from 4,780 adults (Bean et al., 2011). Others like Michael Fix or Jeffrey Passel have created estimates about the size and characteristics of the undocumented population living in the United States based on data released by the Current Population Survey and by the Department of Homeland Security (Capps et al., 2003; Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2012). Based on these studies, it is now estimated that there are about 525,000 undocumented immigrants living in New Jersey today, and about 875,000 living in New York (Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013).

Finally, most of the doctoral research conducted on undocumented youth has focused on their educational experiences and goals, as well as the barriers to higher education which they face (De Leon, 2005; Gonzales, 2008; McCants Cruz, 2013; Munoz, 2008; Munsch, 2011;

Oliveroz, 2006). A few studies looked at career development among undocumented youths (Ton, 2013), access to healthcare (Balderas, 2013), and civic and political engagement (Chen, 2013; Quiroz-Becerra, 2013). With a few exceptions, these studies have relied mostly on interviews as a method for data collection, with the number of participants ranging from 5 (McCants Cruz, 2013) to 10 (De Leon, 2005) to 180 (Oliveroz, 2006). One study conducted in 2011 by a doctoral candidate from the City University of New York surveyed 125 Mexican documented and undocumented youths in New Jersey and used a mixed-method approach similar to the one used for this project (Varela, 2011). Finally, other studies are still being conducted on the use of social media and digital networks by immigrant youths in order to mobilize around the DREAM Act. These studies are conducted through the Media Activism Participatory Politics project of the University of Southern California. They seek to link alternative forms of civic and community participation with formal claims to citizenship. Another research project was initiated in 2012 by Roberto Gonzales and Veronica Terriquez on the impact of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals on its recipients (Gonzales and Terriquez, 2013). Their results come from the National UnDACAmented Research Project, which uses a national online survey of young adults who are DACA recipients. The survey was distributed through intermediary organizations such as community-based, educational, and campus groups which serve immigrants.

Most of the authors of these studies admit a problem of generalizability, due to the means of sample selection and to the particularities of the immigrant population in the area where the data was collected (Abrego and Gonzales, 2010; Gonzales and Terriquez, 2013). Others invite future researchers to compare youths with different statuses, rather than from different generations (Pérez et al., 2009). As a result, the findings of a study primarily based on data collected from students and their non-college-bound peers should not be construed to be



representative of the entire population of undocumented immigrants and undocumented youths living in the United States.

### **Research Design**

The goal of this dissertation project is to offer an evaluation of young Latino immigrants' sense of belonging in American society and its relationship to increased access to public universities. The project focuses exclusively on immigrants from Latin America as a way to maintain consistency and comparability within the sample. Latino immigrants represent the majority of immigrants coming to the United States every year, as well as the vast majority of undocumented immigrants currently living in the country (Passel, Cohn and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2013). Using this group thus represents multiple advantages in terms of access and availability. Other groups in the metropolitan area also show high proportions of undocumented immigrants, particularly the Chinese (Zhou, 2013). Yet undocumented immigrants in this group are much less open about their status, and the Chinese overall tend to participate less in politics than other groups (Kasinitz et al., 2008). In addition, the national origin of immigrant groups greatly affects their manner of immigration, their educational and economic capital, and the availability of a support network at the time of arrival. It was therefore important in this dissertation to maintain a coherent geographical area in terms of the origin of those included in the sample.

At first, a survey was first distributed to college-age Latino immigrants in the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey. This area was chosen because it offered a coherent, metropolitan background divided by two political entities, each with their own policies regarding eligibility for in-state tuition, therefore allowing one to compare an accommodating and a restrictive context of reception. In addition, the proportions of foreign-

born residents and of immigrants from the same regions of the world were similar on both sides of the metropolitan area. In 2012, the proportion of the foreign-born population was 21.2 percent in New Jersey and 22.6 percent in New York (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 American Community Survey). Moreover, immigrants from Latin America made up 45.7 percent of the foreign-born in New Jersey (against for those 32 percent from Asia), and 50 percent of the foreign-born in New York (against 27.4 percent for those from Asia).

While the survey was being distributed, the researcher attended and participated in dozens of events in the two states relative to undocumented youth mobilization around access to higher education. In New York, the mobilization centered on a bill that would provide some undocumented youth access to state financial aid, whereas in New Jersey the focus of the bill was to obtain both in-state tuition and state financial aid.

Finally, invitations to participate in an interview were sent out to some of the respondents who had been identified as potential undocumented immigrants. For this project, “undocumented immigrants” are those who have either arrived to the United States without any legal documentation, or have arrived with a visa (for tourism, education or business) and have overstayed. In addition, “documented immigrants” are those who are currently living in the United States with some form of authorization from the government, such as legal permanent residents. As the literature shows, the boundaries between the two categories can quickly move, and it is not rare for previously documented immigrants to become undocumented due to some change in the law, or for undocumented immigrants to adjust their status and become documented (Cook, 2013). Other invitations to participate in the interview were given directly during fieldwork or through personal referrals by an interviewee.

The survey questions focused on respondents’ educational experience in the United States (both secondary and post-secondary), their levels and types of interaction with other groups,

their sense of belonging, their levels civic engagement and political participation, and their feelings towards the United States. In addition, demographic items collected information on their parents' occupation and assimilation levels. The subject population included immigrant youths between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, who were born in Latin America (except in Puerto Rico). The age bracket used for the study was similar to the one chosen by the National UnDACAmented Research Project (Gonzales and Terriquez, 2013), because Latino college students tend to be older than others (Dozier, 1995). Gonzales (2011) had included in his study immigrant youth age 16 to 30 because this age bracket would cover three distinct periods in the lives of undocumented youths, and the transitions from the shelter of secondary education to the workplace and to total illegality. However, for this project it was decided to focus on young adults.

One of the early challenges in this project came out of the choice of categories of respondents. Initially, the goal was to compare documented and undocumented students on the one hand, and college student and non-college bound workers on the other. However, based on the researcher's discussions with youths during preparation fieldwork, it appeared that there could not be any clear separation between the latter two categories. More often than not, those who are enrolled in college are also working. The enrollment of Latino immigrant youth in college can also be disjointed, with some of them taking a semester off to work and save money to pay for school during the following semester. As a consequence, the main categories which were used in the survey were state of residence and immigration status. As will be explained below, the latter measure was estimated based on the type of visa which respondents held at the time they moved to the United States. The goal of the survey was to help increase knowledge in the field about young Latino immigrants' schooling experience, feelings of belonging in the United States, levels of civic and political participation, and their family environment.

The survey was distributed through intermediaries in New York City and northern New Jersey. The intermediaries were contacted as early as August 2012 to seek their agreement to participate. Some organizations required a personal visit so that the researcher could explain what the study was about and which instruments would be used. These visits were useful in the sense that they helped sharpen the survey instrument and the interview protocol. As a means to increase the chances of sampling both undocumented and documented youths, a large variety of organizations were contacted, all of whom potentially serving immigrant populations. Intermediaries included community based organizations, campus organizations, and immigrant advocacy groups. Since the adoption of a 2002 statute in New York State granting access to in-state tuition to some undocumented youths, several cohorts of undocumented students have been able to benefit from this policy and can now be reached through campus organizations. A list of organizations contacted for the project is available in the Appendix. In New Jersey, there was a greater reliance on advocacy groups compared to student organizations. Because the survey did not ask respondents how they had been invited for participation, it is impossible to track which organizations were the most efficient in reaching out to their constituents. The greatest challenges in this research project were reaching out to the subject population, and guaranteeing their anonymity and the confidentiality of their answers. These difficulties were addressed by using an internet-based survey, as will be discussed below.

Finally, the in-depth interviews focused on the transition from high school to higher education or the labor market, experiences with mobilization and political participation, views on government and comprehensive immigration reform, and experiences with DACA. The interviews were conducted with undocumented youths, in order to focus on the role of status in shaping their civic and political experience in the United States. Thirty respondents were interviewed in each state. Overall, about a third of participants (21) in the interviews were

contacted after taking the survey. Almost a quarter of interviewees (13) were asked directly to participate after meeting during an event, and almost half of the respondents (26) were recruited through traditional snowball sampling. There were some differences in recruitment procedures between the two states, which are discussed below.

### *Using an online survey*

The main advantage of using a web-based survey is that they offer more flexibility for respondents and may prevent the social pressures which are usually associated with traditional interviews and surveys (Alvarez et al., 2003). An online survey can be taken at any time and in any location with internet access, which reduces the necessity to meet with an unknown researcher, and may reassure participants that their anonymity and confidentiality will be protected. Another important item of flexibility was language: the survey was made available in both English and Spanish so as to be careful not to exclude respondents who had moved to the United States more recently and were not yet comfortable in English. Wherever the survey was advertised, two links to the survey were provided, each indicating the language in which the survey would be taken. The Appendix contains the consent forms in English and Spanish, along with the two versions of the survey.

Web-based surveys appear to be well suited to reach out to the population under study, that is to say youths under the age of 30. Social media websites can be used as sampling tools and are most likely to be useful in recruiting respondents who are in college, since all college campuses provide a location where students can access the internet (Alvarez et al., 2003; Peytchev et al., 2006). Social networking sites are cheap to create and to maintain, and therefore provide immigrant youths and the undocumented the opportunity to accumulate social capital, by increasing the number of ties they can form with others (Donath and boyd, 2004;

Ellison, Seinfeld and Lampe, 2007). The fact that many groups found online may segregate themselves according to certain factors such as nationality, occupation, or status, were used to the advantage of this study, because it allowed for the targeting of specific groups in order to ensure the representation of a large number of immigrant groups (boyd and Ellison, 2008).

In another study, Peytchev et al. (2006) have also noted that web-based surveys give the designer more control over the presentation of questions. This was all the more important in this particular project due to the sensitivity of certain questions which may discourage or even deter some of the respondents due to their undocumented status. However the downside of this flexibility is the absence of an incentive to complete the entire survey, and the easiness of exiting the survey. In order to encourage potential respondents to take the survey and complete it, participants were offered the possibility to enter a raffle at the end of the survey, through which they could win an electronic tablet. This type of recruitment of participants has been used in previous studies on immigrant youth and undocumented youths (Gonzales, 2011; Gonzales and Terriquez, 2013). Nevertheless, the completion rates for the online surveys were about 65 percent for the English-language survey, and 57 percent for the Spanish-language instrument.

There are, however, several issues in using web-based surveys, which the researcher attempted to address in designing this study. First of all, the validity of the answers obtained in the survey may be questioned. Peytchev et al. (2006) have addressed the importance of the design in improving the rate of nonresponse in survey-based studies. They showed for example that the use of hyperlinks can have adverse effects “due to respondents’ ability to anticipate the consequences of their selections” (2006: 601). It was therefore extremely important to carefully draft questions so that respondents actually answered them, and did not on the contrary look for ways to avoid sensitive questions regarding status, employment, or time spent in the United

States illegally. Only a few questions were made mandatory, meaning that the respondent could not move on to the next page if they had not answered it. These were questions regarding status and state of residence.

Special attention was paid to wording, as well as the order of questions, in order to establish an artificial form of rapport with the subjects. Because of the characteristics of the subject population, we cannot rely on traditional question order, which usually suggests that biographical and demographic questions be asked first. In this project, this would mean asking questions about national origin and status, which could seem intrusive and dangerous to undocumented respondents. Rivera et al. (2002) encountered a similar problem while interviewing political elites in Russia, for whom questions about travel abroad and business dealings would have immediately raised suspicion. They therefore advise placing potentially threatening questions at the end of the interview after all the substantive questions, and to “phrase them in the most general and non-threatening way” (2002: 686). The same advice was also offered by Leech (2002), who noted that putting personal questions last is a good way to make the instrument about the political issue rather than about the respondents themselves. In this research project, the early questions in the survey asked about respondents’ civic engagement activities and political activities, along with their views on government in the United States as a way to empower them as political subjects. However, placing questions relative to status and state of residence at the end of the survey means that due to loss of participants, these questions were answered less often. Reliability was also an issue, since this project depended on the self-identification of participants as immigrant youths from Latin America. This does not necessarily nullify the results of the study, but it does reduce its power.

Finally, there are ethical considerations to be taken into account before tracking down respondents for this study. The researcher had to weigh the benefits of such an enterprise

against the risks taken by the subjects, which may range from simple discomfort in answering questions to serious anxiety about their futures, especially in the case of undocumented respondents. Here again, the use of a web-based survey provided a partial answer to this problem. By limiting contact with the researcher, the author of the study intended to lower the amount of anxiety linked to taking the survey for respondents. The anonymity of a computer screen may increase the level of comfort of respondents and encourage them to actually take the survey and answer all its questions. This was consistent with the findings of Lara et al. (2004), who tested various methodologies for measuring induced abortions in Mexico. They found that random-response technique yielded the highest rate of responses on this sensitive issue, which they explained by the fact that respondents were more honest about their experience if they did not have to face an interviewer and direct questions. For the purpose of this dissertation project, it thus seems that surveys conducted over the internet, for which respondents do not have to answer directly to someone, provided a sensible course of action.

### *Sampling and issues of representativeness*

There are many challenges related to the collection of data on immigrants, whether documented or undocumented. The representativeness of survey takers is one of the major issues to be addressed in this section. As Massey and Capoferro (2004) noted, most modern censuses depend on the compliant behavior of respondents, which is impossible here. Solutions had to be found to attract participants to the online survey, and ensure the representativeness of the sample. Because the survey was advertised as originating from a well-known university in New York City, it may have appeared as less threatening to immigrant youth. Likewise, to students currently enrolled in the CUNY system, the fact that the survey was coming from within their own university may also have been perceived as a positive element encouraging



them to participate in the study. This type of reaction was mentioned by Peytchev et al. (2006) in the survey they designed for college students. According to the authors, the fact that the survey “was sponsored by a department of the university likely affect[ed] the level of motivation and effort” of the respondents (2006: 604). The source of the survey was thus showed clearly at the beginning of the instrument, on the consent page. Based on later interactions with undocumented interview respondents where the consent form was handed over, it appeared that the name of the University was well known in a positive way, even for respondents living in New Jersey.

The challenge in this study was to reach the subject population while at the same time not alarming them about the fact that they have been identified as immigrants or as undocumented, which could deter some from participating in the project. Rollins and Hirsch (2003) encountered a similar conundrum in their study on sexual identities and political engagement. In their case, they could not simply “isolate and randomly survey just that segment of society” in which they were interested (2003: 296). In order to reach their subject population, they used a third party connected to that population through which they sent out their mail survey. Rollins and Hirsch (2003) relied on LGBTQ organizations as well as a LGBTQ community center to use their mailing lists to send out their survey. In this dissertation project, the same methodology was used by sending the link to the web-based survey to immigrant associations, advocacy groups, student alliances and university offices which can in turn send them out to their members, among whom may be undocumented youths and students.

A similar approach was also advised by Wayne Cornelius in 1982 after he had done fieldwork interviewing undocumented immigrants in Mexico and in the United States. According to him, it was useful to rely on “local notables [...] to reach among their followings for potential interviewees” (1982: 385). A list of organizations contacted to send out the survey

is available in the Appendix. The goal was that the invitation to participate in the survey should be received by the research subjects from a source that they already know and are comfortable with, which should have increased the level of comfort of respondents. Finally, one last means of reaching the subject population was by becoming a participant-observer in rallies, lobbying visits and other events organized by undocumented youth-led organizations in New York and New Jersey. Cornelius had already identified participant-observation as a means to obtain access to undocumented immigrants when he conducted research in the 1980s (1982: 387), and the studies mentioned above all used participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork. Such participation allowed the researcher to make the study better known among the community of immigrants and immigrant advocates, while at the same time increasing the chances of getting non-student immigrants to respond to the survey.

Requests to participate in the surveys were distributed through immigrant-serving organizations and clubs throughout New York City and northern New Jersey. The first step in recruiting the sample was to publicize the survey as much as possible so that a greater number of youths, but also of advocates, professors, and immigrant rights activists were aware of the project and of its goals. Studies conducted with similar populations used a variety of sampling methods. Mehta and Ali (2003) and Abrego (2008) established contact with their participants by volunteering for community-based organizations. Perry (2006) reached out to participants through public agencies which interact with undocumented immigrants. This particular procedure highlights the need to sometimes go through a third party in order to maintain the comfort of the subjects. Gonzales (2008) relied on participant observation and snowball sampling, and he did include in his sample the U.S.-born children of unauthorized parents. He later admitted encountering difficulties in sampling while recruiting through a snowball method and using various settings such as schools, community organizations, college campuses and

churches (Gonzales, 2011). In order to include within the sample those who may not have access to technological support and to the internet, paper surveys were distributed during mobilization and campaign events, but they ultimately represented only a small proportion the data collected at roughly 4 percent of all surveys answered.

Varela (2011) also conducted a study in New York and New Jersey and relied on a snowball sampling method. Similar issues were encountered by Seif (2009) who found it difficult to find a representative sample of immigrant Latina/o youth and described the limitations of locating them through the more traditional method of phone surveys. For obvious reasons, no studies of undocumented students can utilize random sampling procedures. Relying on snowball sampling means we know less about students who are not civically active (Seif, 2009). As an additional method for recruiting, an article was published in *El Diario de Mexico*, a Spanish-language newspaper distributed in New York and New Jersey, which described the study and advertised the link to the survey. The main piece of information which had to be stressed was the anonymity of respondents as well as the confidentiality of the data gathered. Because of the use of an online survey, great use was made of social networks and their potential for reaching out to hundreds of people at once. Networks such as Facebook already contain dozens of groups and pages connected to the DREAM Act or the plight of undocumented students in the United States. By relaying the survey through these pages, as well as on other networks such as Twitter and MySpace, it became possible to reach out to more undocumented youths, as well as their friends and relatives, whether they are in college or not. Table 3.1 below shows a list of groups which were contacted via social media in order to advertise the study. In addition, the Appendix contains a screenshot of a message posted on one of these social media sites advertising the study and relaying the link to the online survey.

Finally, during the interview process, the author asked respondents who had not yet taken the survey to participate in it, and to forward information about the project to their families and friends who met the criteria of the study, as was done in similar endeavors (Pérez, 2012; Pérez et al., 2009).

**Table 3.1 Social Media Relays for the Survey**

<b>New York</b>
Dream Team at Baruch
New York State Youth Leadership Council
Brooklyn Immigrant Youth Coalition
Lehman College Dream Team
Queens College Dream Team
NYU Dream Team
United We Dream
<b>New Jersey</b>
New Jersey Dream Act Coalition
Rutgers Tuition Equality for Dreamers
Mexican American Progress Movement
Passaic Dream Team
Essex County Dream Team
Choforitos United
Tuition Equity for New Jersey Dreamers
New Jersey United Students
Rutgers University Latino Student Council
L.U.N.A. Rutgers
Red Hawk Student Union
Student Government Association of County College of Morris
Ramapo Student Government Association
New Jersey City University Student Government Organization

The characteristics of the immigrant population in each of these areas helped target specific groups. As many have noted, immigrants in New York and New Jersey tend to have very diverse countries of origin, unlike in other regions where a couple of national origins tend to dominate (Foner, 2013). In 2012, immigrants from Central American represented a similar proportion of all immigrants in both states (12 percent in New York and 13.7 percent in New

Jersey, according to the Migration Policy Institute). Immigrants from Mexico represented about 5.5 percent of all immigrants in New York and 6.4 percent of all immigrants in New Jersey. Immigrants from the Caribbean numbered almost 25 percent of all immigrants in New York, but only 15.5 percent in New Jersey. Finally, immigrants from South America represented a larger proportion of all immigrants in New Jersey (16.5 percent) compared to New York (13 percent).

Table 3.2 below presents the national origin of respondents to the survey in each state, along with data computed from the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) on the regional origin of the foreign-born populations in each state. The percentages listed in the table represent the percentage of each geographical group within the total number of immigrants from Latin America in the state, since the sample was drawn from immigrations from that region. For the purpose of this table, the geographical typology adopted follows that of U.S. Census and the American Community Survey, and therefore Mexico is listed as being part of Central America (even though it is geographically part of North America), and the Dominican Republic is listed as part of the Caribbean (even though it is also geographically part of North America).

As the table shows, there were some differences between states in terms of the origin of respondents. Even though they represent actual trends in the distribution of immigrants in the metropolitan area, they tend to exaggerate them. A larger proportion of New Jersey respondents were from South America (about 62 percent) compared to New York respondents (about 22 percent). New York respondents included a larger proportion of Caribbean immigrants (about 49 percent) compared to those in New Jersey (less than 10 percent). The proportion of those born in Central America was actually similar in both states, at about 29 percent. As the table shows, the sample was fairly representative of Latin American immigrants living in the state of

New York, since the proportions in terms of regional origin from the sample are similar to the ones computed from the 2012 American Community Survey. However, the New Jersey sample over-represents those immigrants who were from South America while it under-represents immigrants from the Caribbean.

**Table 3.2 Survey respondents' country of birth (% by state)**

Country of origin	State of residence				Total
	New York	NY ACS	New Jersey	NJ ACS	
<b>CENTRAL AMERICA</b>	28.7	24.0	28.6	30.1	28.6
Mexico	20.3		25.0		22.0
El Salvador	1.4		2.4		1.8
Nicaragua	0.7		0.0		0.4
Costa Rica	1.4		1.2		1.3
Honduras	4.9		0.0		3.1
<b>CARIBBEAN</b>	49.0	49.4	9.5	33.9	34.4
Dominican Republic	48.3		8.3		33.5
Cuba	0.7		1.2		0.9
<b>SOUTH AMERICA</b>	22.4	26.7	61.9	36.1	37
Peru	4.9		16.7		9.3
Ecuador	7.7		15.5		10.6
Colombia	7.0		15.5		10.1
Chile	0.0		3.6		1.3
Bolivia	1.4		2.4		1.8
Brazil	0.0		4.8		1.8
Venezuela	0.0		3.6		1.3
Argentina	1.4		0.0		0.9
<b>Total</b>	100.0		100.0		100.0

### *Collecting data through the survey*

These organizations used to distribute the survey were chosen so as to be diverse not only in the age, nationality, and occupation of the population they served, but they also had to represent distinct areas within each state. Figure 3.1 and figure 3.2 display the geographical distribution of the survey in each state of the metropolitan area of New York-Newark-Jersey

City as defined by the Office of Management and Budget<sup>3</sup> (2013). Figure 3.1 below shows that efforts were made to distribute the survey in all five boroughs of New York City. The goal was to ensure that a diverse group of immigrants would be represented in the sample, with immigrants both from old immigration groups, such as those from the Dominican Republic, and immigrants from more rapidly emerging groups, like Mexicans. Since no data was collected relative to the source from which respondents had received the invitation in order to preserve anonymity, it is not possible to know which organizations and which areas actually contributed to the creation of the sample.

In New Jersey, the survey was distributed in the northern part of the state so as to retain participants who live in the larger New York City metropolitan area (see figure 3.2 below). The survey was distributed in counties that have seen a large increase in their Hispanic population over the last 20 years, especially counties like Middlesex (70 percent increase between 1990 and 2000), Morris (85 percent increase in the same decade), and Union (52 percent increase, data from the Pew Hispanic Center database).

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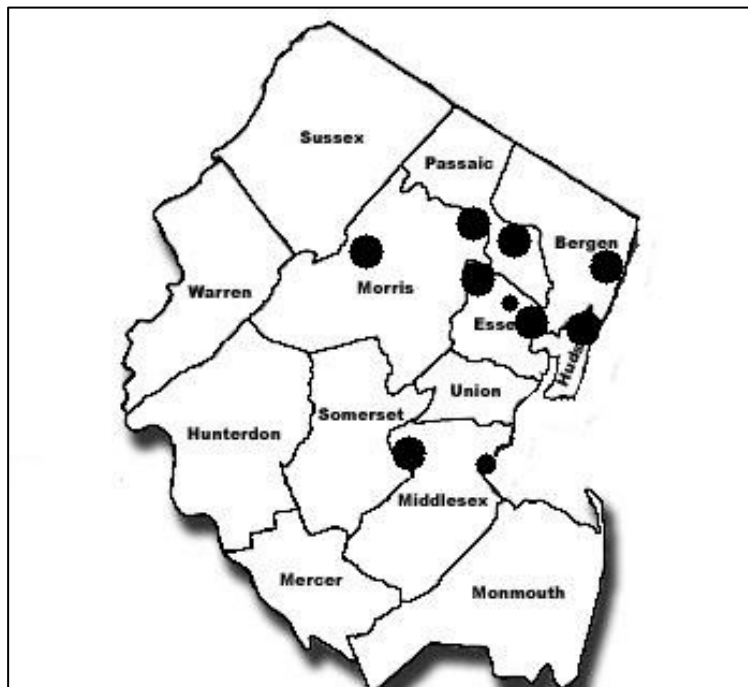
<sup>3</sup> According to the Office of Management and Budget (2013), the New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA Metropolitan Statistical Area included counties in three states: New York (Dutchess, Putnam, Nassau, Suffolk, Bronx, Kings, New York, Orange, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Westchester), New Jersey (Essex, Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union, Bergen, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic) and Pennsylvania (Pike).

**Figure 3.1 Geographical Distribution of the Survey in New York City**



● Indicates a source of distribution for the survey, such as an immigrant organization, an advocacy group, or a student group.

**Figure 3.2 Geographical Distribution of the Survey in Northern New Jersey**



● Indicates a source of distribution for the survey, such as an immigrant organization, an advocacy group, or a student group.



This dissertation was an innovative project in the sense that an attempt was made to use the survey to try to identify potential undocumented respondents who would be eligible to participate in the in-depth interview. The survey instrument was made available in both English and Spanish, as well as in an online and a paper format. Considering the exploratory nature of the study, it seems necessary to establish the level of success of such a study and the type of data collected through these means (Patton, 2002). The following tables indicate major characteristics of the data collected through the survey.

**Table 3.3 Overall survey completion, by language and by format**

	Surveys started	Surveys completed*	Completion rate
<i>English</i>			
- Online	393	255	65
- Paper	12	12	100
<i>Spanish</i>			
- Online	73	42	57
- Paper	0	0	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>64</b>

\*Indicates surveys where all items were answered.

As Table 3.3 indicates, the vast majority of respondents chose to take the survey in English, and online. The problem with the table above is that it includes the responses of participants who were not included in the population, such as those born in the United States, those who did not live in New York or New Jersey, or those who moved to the United States from countries outside of Latin America. In addition, those respondents who failed to answer at least 50 percent of the survey items were eliminated from the pool of data used for the analyses. The actual number of surveys which were kept for final analyses was 303. Nevertheless, these respondents who did not match the proper criteria for the study (those who were born in the U.S. or in Puerto Rico, who were over the age of 30, or those who were born

outside of Latin America) were eliminated from the analyses. The following table breaks down the data on the language in which the survey was taken based on the state of residence of respondents.

**Table 3.4 Survey completion by state and by language**

	New York	New Jersey	Total
English	115	78	193
Spanish	30	9	39
Total	145	87	232

\* Does not include those surveys for which the state of residence was missing.

Table 3.4 shows the completion for those respondents who qualified for the study and who answered the question on state of residence, which was at the end of the survey. This explains why the total n (232) is lower than the total n in the previous table (309). For future research, the researcher would recommend placing key demographic items such as age, state of residence, and likely immigration status at the beginning of the survey instrument. However, for reasons mentioned above concerning participant retention, it was originally decided that such items would be placed toward the end of the survey. The last table concerning the data on survey respondents relates to their likely immigration status. Table 3.5 displays the characteristics of survey takers, by state.

**Table 3.5 Respondent characteristics (% by immigration status and by state)**

Status estimate	State of residence		
	New York	New Jersey	Total
Documented	40.0	14.9	30.6
Undocumented*	60.0	85.1	69.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*The category undocumented was estimated based on respondents' choice of visa at arrival as: no visa, tourist visa, or exchange student (J1) visa.

The survey instrument was not constructed to ask respondents directly about their current immigration status in the United States, or whether they had naturalized as U.S. citizens. The researcher did not want a direct question on status, which could have deterred participation. However, status was estimated based on one of the survey questions, which asked respondents to choose the type of visa that they had at the time they moved to the United States. Respondents who indicated that they had entered the United States without a visa, or with a tourist visa or an exchange student visa were estimated to be likely to have been undocumented at some point in their lives, which means that it was possible that they were still undocumented today (Kasinitz et al., 2008). Table 4 indicates that about 30 percent of the respondents to the survey were likely to be documented, while almost 70 percent of respondents were likely to be undocumented.

Due to the manner of estimating status, this method most likely over-estimates the proportion of undocumented respondents. Indeed, it is possible that someone who entered on a tourist visa or an exchange student visa may have changed their status to legal permanent resident over the years (Kasinitz et al., 2008). However, the interviews with undocumented respondents later revealed that these three categories were indeed relevant, since the vast majority of undocumented interview respondents had entered the United States in these ways. Finally, in terms of the sample, there was also a probable over-sampling of potentially undocumented respondents with the use of the paper survey, which was distributed during events organized by undocumented youth-led organizations.

### *Collecting data from in-depth interviews*

The data from the survey was complemented by in-depth, semi-structured interviews of undocumented Latino immigrant youths. The innovation at the center of the design of the

survey was that potential interview respondents were identified based on their answer to the question relative to the visa they held when they moved to the United States. The instrument then provided the opportunity to skip directly to a different section of the survey. Those who answered that they had come to the United States through sponsorship by a family member, or with a work-visa, or with a diversity visa were sent directly to the end of the survey, where they could choose to enter a raffle. For others, the skip logic was used to invite participants whether they wanted to participate in an interview, and to provide some means to contact them. Figure 3.3 below displays the construction of the skip logic in the survey instrument. Once respondents had provided an email address or in some cases a phone number, the researcher contacted them to invite them to participate in an in-depth interview. A copy of the invitation email is available in the Appendix.

The invitation listed the criteria for participation in the interviews: participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 30, born in Latin America (except Puerto Rico), and be undocumented. The emails never asked potential interview respondents to answer clearly about their status. Overall, interview respondents were recruited in two steps: survey invitations were sent out and the first interviews took place. The second step consisted of traditional snowball sampling where the researcher asked interview participants to advertise the study and provide contact information for other potential participants. Displays of the recruitment of participants (through the survey, snowball sampling, and direct invitation) are available in the Appendix.

The survey was more useful in finding interview respondents in New York, which is largely due to the fact that a larger number of responses were collected in that state, and therefore more potential participants were identified in this manner. Only two interviewees in New York were recruited directly after the researcher participated in an event for the financial aid campaign in that state. These participants were identified as highly involved activists, and

were therefore selected for participation to provide insights into factors of political mobilization among undocumented youths.

**Figure 3.3 Skip logic inviting some participants for interviews**

**Question**

What type of visa did you hold when you came to live in the United States?

**Skip Logic**

To add skip logic to one or more answer choice, choose the destination page and question under "Skip to."

If answer is	Skip to	Clear All
Family-sponsored visa (family reunification)	End of survey --	Clear
Tourist visa	PAGE 10 Q52: Would you agree to be contacted for a p...	Clear
Work/Student (F) or Business visa	End of survey --	Clear
Diversity program visa	End of survey --	Clear
Exchange visitor (J)	PAGE 10 Q52: Would you agree to be contacted for a p...	Clear
No visa	PAGE 10 Q52: Would you agree to be contacted for a p...	Clear

In New Jersey, a larger proportion of respondents were found through observation and participant-observation during events organized by youth-led organizations. Advertising for the online survey was more difficult to accomplish in that state. Approval from the International Review Board had to be sought for campuses where the researcher wanted to collect data, which was time consuming. Approval was denied in multiple campuses, which limited the number of groups which could be targeted. In addition, organizations which support the DREAM Act or the New Jersey Dream Act on tuition equity are more recent in this state compared to those in New York, and they therefore were not able to provide the same type of support in terms of broadcasting the study. As a result, the survey in New Jersey obtained a

smaller number of respondents, and therefore it became necessary to recruit interview participants through more traditional means such as snowball sampling and direct invitation during observation and participant observation of campaign events. Even though a larger proportion of respondents were contacted during campaign events, the proportion of activists and non-activists is the same in each state. The reason for this is that while several interview respondents were contacted during campaign or campus events related to the DREAM Act, many of them were attending a political event for the first time in their life, and they had therefore no prior experience of political or civic activity.

### *The interview protocol*

The interviews protocol favored a semi-structured design since rigid instruments and closed-form questions are inappropriate and obtrusive for research on undocumented migrants (Cornelius, 1982; Massey and Capoferro, 2004). Here the goal was to investigate factors and social processes which hinder or encourage political mobilization, which requires an in-depth understanding of people's social, economic, and political situation as well as of their past personal experiences. In-depth interviews are more apt to capture the complexity of such a process. As Mason (2002) describes the choice of qualitative interviews as a data collection instrument for those researchers who base the construction of social explanation and arguments on "depth, nuance, complexity and roundedness in data, rather than the kind of broad surveys of surface patterns which questionnaires might provide" (2002: 65). Qualitative research is often used to gather data on vulnerable populations, which are described as such because of the situation they find themselves in (Ensign, 2003). The label "vulnerable" has been used for populations such as homeless youths, impoverished seniors, or respondents with HIV/AIDS. Participants from marginalized groups may struggle to describe their experiences because they

have never before had the opportunity to express themselves, which is why a more flexible interview protocol is recommended (Reinharz and Chase, 2002).

The risks associated with semi-structured interviews are relatively low compared to other scientific endeavors. In this study, immigration status and access to college constitute sensitive topics for respondents, and talking about them may bring up emotional responses on their part. Nevertheless, the design of the interview protocol can help respondents retain some degree of control over the topic of conversation, or the amount of information they are willing to share with the researcher (Corbin and Morse, 2003). This was the case with Elias (NJ) who became very emotional when recalling his experience of lobbying for the New Jersey DREAM Act at the state legislature: “I guess, every time I talk about that stuff, I always get memories. And it’s just too much to bear, sometimes. I get really sad. [he pauses]”. In this particular instance, using a flexible interview protocol allowed the researcher to move on to another topic and ask a question related to an event that both interviewer and interviewee had attended the week before. The content of the interview protocol was initially checked by researchers and practitioners in the field of immigrant advocacy before being used with undocumented youths. Since the interviews were semi-structured, questions which did not yield any relevant responses throughout the first third of the interviews were progressively abandoned, and only used based on the responses of the participant at the time of their interview.

Since the design of the study was exploratory, the researcher was able to include among participants siblings and close friends, which provided for a deeper understanding of undocumented youths’ approach to higher education, their transition to college, and role of family and peers while controlling for background characteristics. Undocumented immigrants are embedded in family, friendship and community networks, “so that many more people are actually affected by the obstacles the undocumented face” (López and Jiménez, 2003: 341). In

fact, Massey and Sánchez (2010) noted that some of the most vulnerable U.S. citizens are those who reside in mix-status households, who make up about 15 million persons. These include children who suffer from the associated economic, social and medical deprivations of being undocumented. As a result, the interview protocol was designed to address the complexity of mixed-status families. More than half of the interview respondents (35 out of 60) had siblings who were born in the United States. It is therefore important to address how public policy favorable to some undocumented students could also affect the lives of their families. Other studies have included U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants in order to investigate college enrollment (Fix and Zimmermann, 1999; Kaushal, 2008). For the purpose of this project however, only undocumented respondents were interviewed. The interview protocol also relied on oral consent from the participants, who were given a consent form signed by the investigator to take with them. The signature of the consent form was waived by the Institutional Review Board since the overall risk incurred by the research was minimal and a signed consent form would be the only way to identify each individual's participation in the project (Ensign, 2003).

To encourage participation, compensation was provided in the form of a \$15 gift card, which was handed directly to the participant once the interview was completed. Several of the participants refused compensation and explained that they were happy that the topic was being studied and that they did not want to take advantage of the finances of a graduate student. There are debates in the literature regarding participant compensation in interviews. Some have shared concerns that participants may agree to do the interview only for monetary gains, and therefore may not tell the truth, or may only provide a rehearsed narrative that had proved worthy before (McKegany, 2001). Ensign (2003) noted that compensation for participants should cover time and expenses, but should not be so high as to provide an undue incentive.



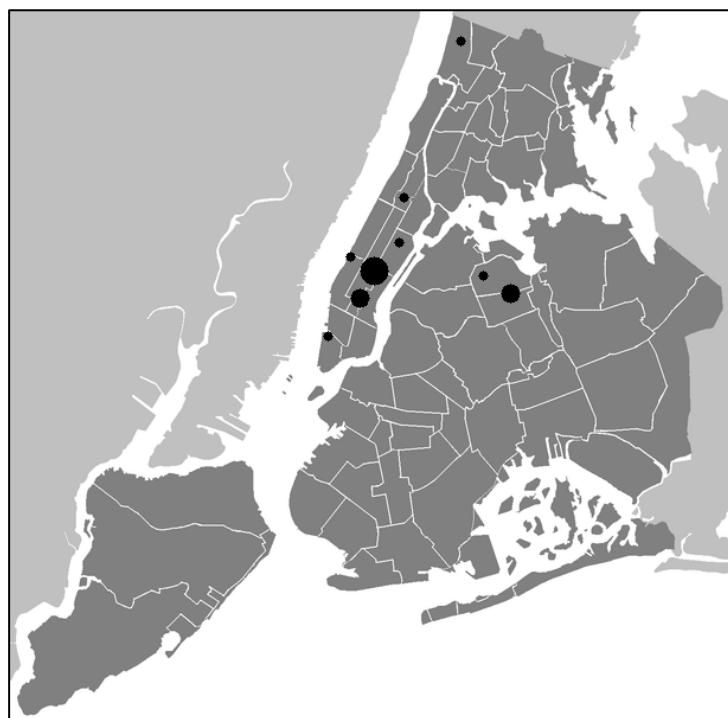
This is all the more important as most of the literature on qualitative interview methods has emphasized that the main concern in qualitative research is to establish the accuracy of the report provided by the participant and the absence of any of the researcher's influence on the generation of the data (Roulston, 2010).

Payment can also highlight the unequal power relationship of the interview, and lead interviewees to attempt to gain agency during the interview process in order to overcome the stigma of poverty (Cook and Nunkoosing, 2008). Hence care was taken throughout interviews to make participants comfortable. The researcher re-introduced herself at the beginning in order to remind the participant that she was a student and an immigrant herself. The gift card was only given at the end of the interview, so as not to place the interview process under the aura of a monetary exchange. Nevertheless, as will be presented below, the attempts at creating a bond between investigator and interviewees as immigrants and students were not always successful.

Interviews were conducted in multiple sites which are displayed in figures 3.4 and 3.5 below. These meetings required coordination between the investigator and the respondent, and many were scheduled in a location that was practical for both, and which was not necessarily near the respondent's place of residence. Several choices were given to each respondent, letting them choose a location with which they would be the most comfortable. As the figures below show, interview sites were more concentrated geographically compared to survey distribution sites. This is because interviews require face to face interaction, and a compromise location has to be found. Besides one exception, all interviews took place in a public place, such as a school cafeteria or lounge, a coffee shop or a diner. Interview sites in New York included the CUNY Graduate Center, various cafés and school lounges in the Bronx and Queens, as well as the office of a New York-based immigrant-serving organization. Even though no interviews were conducted in Brooklyn, several interview respondents indicated that they lived there. In spite of

the concentration of interview sites in Manhattan, there was nevertheless a wide distribution of places of residence across New York City. Three respondents even lived outside of the City's limits, two of them in the Westchester county area, and other one out in Long Island. As Map 3 shows, there is a concentration of interviews at the CUNY Graduate Center. This is because this site represented several advantages to conduct these interviews: it is centrally located in Manhattan and close to many public transportation lines; it is a public location; and finally unlike other CUNY sites the cafeteria is accessible to anyone, so there is no need to show identification to walk in. This provided a great advantage because it helped reassure interview participants that their anonymity would be preserved.

**Figure 3.4 Interview sites in New York City**



- Indicates a location where an interview took place. Larger circles indicate that a larger number of interviews took place at the same location (such as the CUNY Graduate Center in midtown).

**Figure 3.5 Interview sites in Northern New Jersey**



- Indicates a location where an interview took place. Larger circles indicate that a larger number of interviews took place at the same location (such as Newark or Union City).

In New Jersey, interviews took place in cafés in Jersey City, Union City and Newark, where most of the interviews were conducted. Newark sites included both public places such as cafeterias and coffee lounges, but also school lounges due to the high concentration of institutions of higher education there. Other interview sites included public places in Dover, New Brunswick, Elizabeth, Passaic, Montclair, and Edgewater, which were closer to the participants' places of residence. Overall, interviews were more difficult to schedule in New Jersey compared to New York due to the greater distances that had to be covered in that state, but also because respondents were much less mobile than in New York. Respondents in the latter had the New York City public transportation system at their disposal, which is very widely distributed across the city and provides regular and quick transportation within a wide area. In New Jersey, public transportation was not always available (as was the case in Edgewater for example), and train tickets were also more expensive than subway tickets. This

is why additional efforts were made on the part of the researcher to try to meet respondents closer to their place of employment (as was the case in Montclair and New Brunswick) or their place of residence (Dover and Elizabeth for example).

*Data collected from the interviews*

The data collected from the interviews comes from sixty in-depth interviews conducted with undocumented Latino immigrant youths. Within each state, thirty interviews were conducted. The tables below present the major characteristics of the data in terms of gender, level of political activity, country of origin, and age at arrival.

**Table 3.6 Interview data breakdown by gender**

	New York	New Jersey	Total
Female	14	16	30
Male	16	14	30
Total	30	30	60

The early literature on the mobilization of undocumented immigrants has shown the overrepresentation of women in the undocumented youths' movement (Milkman and Terriquez, 2011). As a consequence, the interview protocol was designed to sample an equal number of men and women, which is represented in Table 3.6 above. Overall, an equal number of men and women were interviewed. The goal of this design is to try to explore the possible existence of obstacles which would prevent young men's participation, and factors of mobilization in young women's environments.

**Table 3.7 Interview data breakdown by participation in undocumented students' movement**

	New York	New Jersey	Total
Not involved	17	15	32
Involved*	13	15	28
Total	30	30	60

\*Measured by membership and active participation in an organization advocating in-state tuition or state financial aid at the state level, or the DREAM Act at the federal level.

The goal of this project was to investigate the civic and political engagement of immigrant youths living under different state policies. As Table 3.7 above shows, undocumented youths who participated in this project therefore included some who were active in the movement to support the DREAM Act in Congress, or in favor of state-level tuition policy. However, it was also necessary to recruit non-politically active respondents to investigate the differences in personal and environmental characteristics between these two groups. This design allows the researcher to establish factors which prevent some youths from participating, or other personal or outside characteristics which can deter others from wishing to become involved.

**Table 3.8 Interview data breakdown by country of origin**

	New York	New Jersey	Total
Mexico	20	10	30
Ecuador	2	7	9
Peru	1	6	7
Colombia	3	0	3
Honduras	2	1	3
Dominican Republic	1	1	2
Costa Rica	0	2	2
El Salvador	1	0	1
Brazil	0	1	1
Venezuela	0	1	1
Uruguay	0	1	1
Total	30	30	60

Table 3.8 presents the country of origin of interview respondents in the two states. The table shows that overall there is a similar proportion of respondents from Latin America as in the undocumented population in New York and New Jersey. The Latino undocumented immigrant population in New Jersey is more diverse than in New York, with less over-representation of one particular country – Mexico. The large number of Ecuadorians in the sample echoes the fact that immigrants from this country are the largest group from South America in the region. According to recent reports on DACA recipients, east coast states have a more diverse population of undocumented youths. In New Jersey, about 31 percent of applicants were from Mexico, and 30 percent were from South America (Singer and Svajlenka, 2013). The proportion in the sample was similar for those from Mexico, and slightly higher for those from South America, which is probably due to the use of snowball sampling. In New York, 24 percent of DACA recipients were from Mexico, while 16 percent were from Central American and 22 percent from South America. These lower proportions are due to the fact that the undocumented population in New York is very diverse, and includes a larger proportion of Asian, African, and European undocumented youths than other states. The sample for this project showed a higher proportion of Mexican undocumented youths than in the state, but still included representatives of Central and South America as well.

Finally, this study focuses on the political incorporation of immigrants, therefore the design provided for the recruitment of a majority of undocumented youths who have arrived to the United States before or at age 13 to the United States. This helped include respondents who had attended at least high school in the United States, and thus may have developed U.S.-based habits, aspirations, and credentials. As table 3.9 below shows, all respondents in the sample had arrived before age 17. Respondents who arrived at a later age were also included because they tend to be under-studied (because since they tend not to be in school or college they are a hard

to reach population), and because they provided the opportunity to try to understand the barriers older immigrants may face in becoming more politically active compared to those who arrived at a younger age. A chart containing major characteristics for each interviewee is available in the Appendix.

**Table 3.9 Interview data breakdown by age at arrival**

	New York	New Jersey	Total
< 5 years old	9	5	14
5-13 years old	14	23	37
13-17 years old	7	2	9
Total	30	30	60

### *Retaining participants*

As mentioned above, there were some issues in creating a bond with certain interview participants. This section seeks to add on the literature on interview methods, especially in regards to issues of distance and similarity between interviewer and interviewee. Various characteristics of the interviewer have been evaluated in regards to their effect on the interview process. Riessman (1987) established that a common gender was not enough to guarantee a mutual understanding between interviewer and interviewee. Harkess and Warren (1993) added that a pre-existing relationship between investigator and participant was not a source of validity either. In effect, and particularly due to the population under study in this project, relations of power in interviews have to be taken into account. The interview process has been recognized as the site of powered interactions, where the researcher is typically in a power position (Briggs, 2002; Kvale, 2006; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013). The design of an interview protocol can be adapted to include semi-structured or open-ended questions which provide

more flexibility and therefore the opportunity for interview participants to regain control over the narratives or the direction of the interview (Corbin and Morse, 2003). This was all the more important here as, even though the interviewer was a foreign-born student, several respondents did not hesitate to highlight the distance which separated her situation from that of interviewees.

The first difficulty in retaining participants and establishing rapport was due to the fact that several respondents were surprised that a person with the researcher's characteristics (European and apparently middle class) would be interested in studying Latino undocumented youths. On seeing me arrive for the interview, one respondent in Passaic, NJ exclaimed quite candidly: "I was expecting a Hispanic chick!" There were multiple occurrences during interviews and participant-observation fieldwork when the researcher had to justify her choice of research topic. One discussion leader during a campaign strategy meeting strongly expressed his perplexity at the fact that a "white chick from France", as it was phrased, would be interested in this topic.

The beginning of the interview was the key moment in which the relationship between interview participants could be shaped. For this project, it was used to give participants the consent form, give them time to go over it and ask questions, and ask them permission to record the interview. This was also the time when the researcher would introduce herself, her background as an immigrant and a student, so as to attempt to reduce distance between investigator and interviewee (Corbin and Morse, 2003). It has been noted that individual background can shape the course of an interview, and affects the power relationship between interviewee and interviewer (Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013). Age was an advantage in this case, since there was little difference between the participants of the interview process. However other outside characteristics of the researcher surfaced during interviews, with



comments from the interviewees about differences in participants' economic statuses and immigration statuses. The latter occurred during the interview with Miguel (NY), who was among the older immigrants who were interviewed for the project: "I thought you were going to ask about the difference between undocumented students [...] and people who come here just to study. [...] Because that is also a huge issue that has to do with race I think. [...] whenever they talk about foreign students, the picture that they have is always [...] European[s]. Like you, basically." Miguel (NY) went on to compare the situation of undocumented students who have attended high school in the United States and get little support from the state, and international students like the researcher who are eligible for fellowship and other tuition support.

Another New York respondent, Gael, used the researcher's personal background in order to illustrate public perception of undocumented immigrants. When asked to explain why he claimed he could identify someone as undocumented, he changed his answer: "If you were undocumented, there's no way I could tell, because, you know, of your skin color, or what you wear, you know... You look like you're well off." These comments show that some participants did not hesitate to question the position and motives of the researcher and to attempt to regain some degree of power over the interview process (Kvale, 2006). The flexibility inherent to the semi-structured interview protocol allowed for the researcher to adapt to the changing relationship between interviewee and interviewer.

### *Fieldwork and Participant Observation*

In addition to the survey, throughout the fall of 2012 and all of 2013 the researcher conducted observation and participant-observation fieldwork throughout the states of New York and New Jersey. In New York, the author followed the activists involved in the

mobilization behind the New York Dream Act (A. 2597/S. 2378 introduced in 2013, see DiNapoli and Bleiwas, 2013), and attended scholarly and political events related to this topic. In New Jersey, the researcher followed the activists involved in the mobilization in favor of the New Jersey Dream Act (originally Assembly Bill 4225, later Senate Bill 2479 introduced in 2013, which became Public Law 2013, c.170). The bill was finally passed by the New Jersey Legislature and signed into law by the Governor, Chris Christie, on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 (Semple, 2013). The researcher also participated in events where young activists discussed and decided on their strategy to pursue these policies, and others where they organized demonstration, contacted public officials, or attempted to raise awareness about this issue among the public. A list of events attended is available in the Appendix. The author took notes during these events, which were later transcribed and anonymized so as to protect the identity of potential interview respondents. These notes initially helped further develop the interview protocol for the project, and were later analyzed to look for common themes or emerging concepts.

### **Analyzing the data**

In order to analyze data collected through the online survey, the researcher used the statistical software package SPSS to conduct descriptive statistics and run regressions investigating the effects of personal and outside characteristics on average levels of belonging, civic engagement, and political participation. The main variables which were used were similar to other endeavors on this topic, and included enrollment in college, availability of in-state tuition through state statute, and state of residence (Flores, 2010).

Interviews were recorded digitally, transcribed and anonymized. The transcription was done with the support of Dragon Naturally Speaking, a voice-recognition software. Multiple

attempts at achieving confidentiality were made by giving pseudonyms to each participant during the transcription process, but also by changing the names of the institutions they attended in case they were enrolled in college. The issue with in-depth narratives and life histories is that they tend to provide too many details about a participant's life, and therefore they may make it possible to identify them (Ensign, 2003). In addition, efforts at triangulation were conducted by making transcripts available to the respondents, so they could read them over and check for mistakes. The practice of "member check" has been shown to confirm the accuracy of what was captured in the interview, but also to restore balance in the relationship between investigator and interviewee (Buchbinder, 2011). As agreed with the respondents, at this point, the original recordings were erased to protect their confidentiality. Interview data was also checked through personal observations during interviews and participant-observation fieldwork. For example, during an event on DACA application held by New Jersey activists in December 2013, the exchanges witnessed provided the opportunity to verify that the experiences of interview respondents matched those of other undocumented youths.

Interviews and notes from observation fieldwork were analyzed with the use of the software Atlas.ti. The software was used to run analyses and review interviews systematically to look for emerging themes, using "code and retrieve" technique and establishing connections between categories of the data (state, gender, urban/suburban environment) and possible outcomes, such as attendance, type of institution attended, political knowledge, and participation (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). A list of codes is available in the Appendix. The data was also analyzed cross-sectionally by theme. The researcher made an effort to read the data from alternative interpretive perspectives, so as to look for other resources the respondents mention that could have helped or hindered their political participation. Another way to keep alternative interpretations open was to look for other

institutions – besides public colleges and universities– and public policies the respondents interacted with that could hinder or support their civic and political mobilization.

## **Chapter 4: Immigrant youth and belonging**

The goal of this research project is to compare levels of belonging among Latino immigrant youths living in the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey. For the project a comprehensive measure of belonging was developed based on traditional assimilation measures, levels of belonging, and educational experience. The assumption behind the project was that different policies relative to access to in-state tuition would lead to variations in levels of belonging among immigrant youths, particularly among undocumented Latino immigrants. This chapter presents the results from the survey of college-age Latino immigrants living in the metropolitan area. Descriptive statistics are presented for measures of assimilation such as language assimilation, educational attainment, ties with country of origin, belonging, and trust in the United States. Analyses of the data show that individual characteristics such as age at arrival or experiences with discrimination may play a larger role than state policies in affecting levels of belonging among respondents.

### **Traditional measures of assimilation**

Traditional measures of assimilation include command of English and of one's language of origin (mostly Spanish in the sample), ties with the country of origin, educational attainment, and levels of self-esteem. These constituted the first step toward documenting a comprehensive understanding of belonging among immigrant youths.

## Language

The survey was made available in both English and Spanish so as to be able to include young immigrants who were not yet completely comfortable with English. However, a large majority of respondents – almost 92 percent – took the survey in English. In fact, most of the respondents indicated that they spoke English at least well, even for those who had taken the survey in Spanish. Table 4.1 describes respondent’s comfort in English based on four different measures of their ability to communicate in this language: speaking, understanding, reading and writing. Levels of English are shown along with the language in which the survey was taken.

**Table 4.1 Command of English, by survey language**

<b>How well do you speak/understand/read/write English?</b>										
Survey language	<b>At least a</b>								<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Not at all</b>		<b>little</b>		<b>At least well</b>		<b>Very well</b>			
	Count	%*	Count	%*	Count	%*	Count	%*	Count	%*
<b>English</b>	0	0.0	4	2	66	31.5	140	66.7	210	100.0
<b>Spanish</b>	1	2.5	8	20	26	65	5	12.5	40	100.0
<b>Total</b>	1	0.4	12	4.8	92	36.8	145	58.0	250	100.0

\* Percentage within the survey language

As the table shows, for those who took the survey in English, two thirds of respondents indicated that they were very comfortable in English, and almost a third of respondents said that they spoke it at least well. For those who took the survey in Spanish, the proportion of respondents who indicated that they spoke English at least well also represented the majority of respondents, albeit slightly less than for the other group (a combined 77.5 percent as opposed to 97 percent for English survey takers). About 22 percent of those who had taken the survey in Spanish indicated a low level of comfort with the English language. This table indicates that the

vast majority of the immigrant youths who took the survey are comfortable with English, even for those who took up the opportunity to answer the survey in a different language.

For immigrant youths in this research project, Spanish was the most commonly spoken language at home. More than 90 percent of the respondents indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home. Among them, 97 percent specified that this other language was Spanish. Other languages present in the sample were Portuguese (1.7 percent of respondents), Italian, German and Nahuatl, an indigenous language from Southern Mexico and Central America (each less than 0.5 percent of respondents). Respondents were asked to indicate how well they spoke, understood, read, and wrote in this other language. Table 4.2 shows the results for respondents' comfort with their parent's language.

**Table 4.2 Command of parent's language among Latino immigrant youths, by survey language**

Language of survey	How well do you speak/understand/read/write your home language?									
	Not at all		At least a little		At least well		Very well		Total	
		%*		%*		%*		%*	%*	
<b>English</b>	2	1.0	24	11.6	67	32.1	115	55.3	208	100.0
<b>Spanish</b>	1	2.4	3	7.3	9	22	28	68.3	41	100.0
<b>Total</b>	3	1.2	27	10.8	76	30.4	143	57.4	249	100.0

\* Percentage within survey language

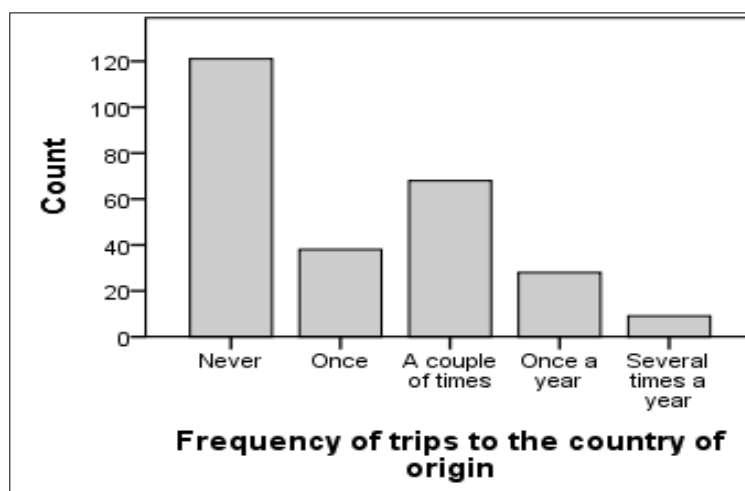
The table shows that the respondents tend to be comfortable with the language of their parents, which in this study is most likely Spanish. However, compared with Table 4.1, the trend is reversed. A greater majority of those who took the survey in Spanish tend to be comfortable with the language of their parents (over 90 percent combined speaking at least well) than for those who took the survey in English (87 percent). In addition, less than 10

percent of Spanish survey takers described a low level of comfort in their parents' language compared to 12.6 percent among those who took the survey in English. Overall, Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 together show that immigrant youth are generally comfortable in both English and another language – most likely Spanish in the case of this study. Some variations exist between the two groups, especially in their ability to use English. This limitation on their ability to assimilate, at least linguistically, may affect their sense of belonging in the United States, especially for those respondents who live in suburban areas where immigrant populations may be less concentrated.

#### *Ties with one's country of origin*

In this project, young immigrants' ties with their country of origin were measured through items regarding travel to one's country of origin, contact with family members still living in the country of origin, contact with people in the US who are from the same country, and membership in an ethnic or immigrant organization. Figure 4.1 shows how often respondents have traveled to their country of origin since they have moved to the United States.

**Figure 4.1 Frequency of travel to one's country of origin**





As can be seen in Figure 4.1, a large proportion of respondents have actually never traveled back to their country of origin. This may be due to the high proportion of respondents likely to be undocumented in the sample, but also to the limited means of their families. Nevertheless, since the majority of respondents has either never traveled back, or traveled back only once, the ability to stay connected with one's country of origin depends largely on resources available from the United States. These resources include contact with family members and friends who are either living abroad or in the United States, and on membership in an immigrant or ethnic organization. These resources can help estimate the strength of young immigrants' connection to their country of origin. Respondents in the survey were asked about these resources, and were given a score from 1 through 4, where 1 indicates a weak connection and 4 indicates a very strong connection to their country of origin. Table 3 below shows the distribution among respondents of ties to one's country of origin based on travel and on resources available in the United States.

**Table 4.3 Strength of ties to immigrants' country of origin (% of participants)**

<b>Strength of ties to one's country of origin</b>				
Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong	Total
17.4	55.6	34.4	0	100.0

From Table 4.3, we can see that respondents in the study mostly have a moderate connection to their country of origin, and that a greater proportion has weak ties to their native country than very strong ties. This is due to the fact that few of them have been able to travel frequently, but also to their lack of engagement with an immigrant or ethnic organization in the

United States. Indeed, less than a third of respondents indicated that they belonged to an ethnic or immigrant organization, which could help them keep in touch with the history, politics, and economic development of their country of origin. In terms of contact with people who are from the same country, respondents were more likely to say that they often talk with people who are living in the United States and are from the same country, rather than actually communicate with family members and friends who are still living in the country of origin. Just as we saw with Figure 4.1, this confirms that respondents' means of staying in touch with their country of origin depends primarily on the resources that they can find in the United States, whether it is people from the same country, or immigrant organizations which can help them learn more about their native country.

In order to determine what factors have an effect on whether respondents maintained ties with their country of origin, a binary logistic regression was conducted, using ties to the home country as the dependent variable. In the first model, displayed in the first column on the table below, the independent variables used were age at arrival in the U.S., level of trust in the U.S., feelings of belonging in the U.S. and feelings of belonging in one's country of origin. In the second model, displayed in the second column, parental socio-economic level was added as a control variable.

**Table 4.4 Determinants of maintenance of ties with one's country of origin**

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
(Constant)	-.564	-1.464
Age at arrival in the U.S.	.028	.014
Trust in the U.S.	.164	.300
Belonging in the U.S.	.095	-.038
Belonging in country of origin	.363*	.543**
Parent SES		.345
Chi-square	9.768*	16.341**

\*sig < .05. \*\*sig < .01  
The outcome variable used is ties with country of origin (no ties = 0, some or a lot of ties = 1)

Among respondents who have maintained at least some ties with their country of origin, feelings of belonging in that country as opposed to the United States have a significant effect. This effect is reinforced when adding parental socio-economic status as a control variable, which makes the second model a better fit. This could be explained by the fact that a higher level of parental SES could allow the respondents to travel to their country of origin, and therefore become better acquainted with it. Other variables which could be assumed to have an effect, such as age at arrival in the U.S. or trust in the U.S. had were not significant factors of difference.

#### *Educational attainment*

This project investigates the relationship between state policies relative to access to higher education and sense of belonging among college-age Latino immigrant youths. Educational level among respondents were assessed by asking whether respondents were or had been enrolled in college, if they were paying in-state tuition in college. Respondents also had to indicate the highest degree they had attained so far. Table 4 shows the proportion of

respondents who are enrolled or who have been enrolled in college in both New York and New Jersey.

**Table 4.5 College enrollment among study participants (% by state)**

	<b>New York</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Not enrolled</b>	17.9	12.6	15.9
<b>Enrolled</b>	82.1	87.4	84.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.5, we can see that most respondents in the survey tended to be enrolled in college, or to have been enrolled in college at some point. Over 80 percent of respondents in both New York and New Jersey said they were or had been enrolled in an institution of higher education. The proportion of those having been or in college was higher in New Jersey than in New York, which goes against the assumption of this project since access to in-state tuition was impossible in New Jersey until December 2013. However the collection of the data was done through intermediaries who were often affiliated with higher education institution such as student groups, community organizations, or even community colleges in the region. This can explain why there was such a high proportion of respondents who were enrolled or had been enrolled in college among study participants. A recent report from the Research Alliance for New York City Schools in fact indicated that in spite of progresses made over the last few years, Latino students' enrollment rates were 46 percent for Latino males, and 56 percent for Latinas (Villavicencio, Bhattacharya and Guidry, 2013). Since data collection in New Jersey relied more on snowball sampling than in New York, respondents were also more likely to be in college after being recruited by other college-goers.

We must however look at what was the outcome of this enrollment, since having been enrolled in college does not necessarily lead to graduation. Table 4.6 presents survey takers' responses on highest degree achieved by age, so as to ascertain how quickly this particular group move through college once they enroll.

**Table 4.6 Educational attainment among Latino immigrant youths (% by age group)**

Age group	Highest degree attained				Total
	Some college	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	
18-20	87.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	100.0
21-22	49.1	36.8	14.1	0.0	100.0
23-24	55.2	34.5	10.3	0.0	100.0
25-26	33.3	33.3	27.8	5.6	100.0
27-30	42.9	21.4	28.6	7.1	100.0

Overall, the educational attainment of the respondents was low. Over sixty percent of all respondents indicated that they had accomplished some college, but had not graduated yet from either a 2-year or a 4-year institution. About a quarter of the sample responded that they had obtained an Associate's degree, and 11 percent had received a Bachelor's degree. Only 1 percent of the respondents had obtained a Master's degree. None of the respondents indicated that they had obtained a law degree, doctoral degree, or medical doctor's degree, which was the highest possible answer in the instrument.

What Table 4.6 above shows is that even if a large proportion of respondents overall had at some point enrolled in college, they did not necessarily graduate from the institutions they attended. For those age 23 and 24, who are of the traditional age for those holding a Bachelor's degree, only 10 percent had actually received this type of degree. Even for the oldest age group, those between the age of 27 and 30, a larger proportion of respondents indicated that they had

only achieved some college than any other type of degree. Also among this age group, less than a third had obtained a bachelor's degree, and less than a quarter had obtained an Associate's degree. Therefore in spite of the high levels of college enrollment among the participants, the levels of educational attainment was mostly restricted to having completed some years in college or an Associate's degree.

It is important to understand what barriers exist which prevent Latino immigrant youths from finishing college after enrolling. One of the assumption of this research project is that access to in-state tuition both provides greater access to college for undocumented youths and sends a message to the entire immigrant community about their consideration by the state. Until December 2013, only New York provided in-state tuition to some undocumented youths, while New Jersey did not. After a campaign which lasted several years, and intensified throughout 2013, in-state tuition was finally granted to some undocumented youths in New Jersey. However the survey was available to respondents prior to this date, and responses presented in Table 6 give an indication of access to in-state tuition among respondents.

**Table 4.7 Proportion of respondents paying in-state tuition (by state)**

Tuition fees	State		Total
	New York	New Jersey	
Not in college	5.0	5.1	5.1
Does not pay in-state tuition	29.4	44.9	35.5
Pays in-state	65.5	50.0	59.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As the table above shows, when looking at differences between the two states in terms of access to in-state tuition, a greater proportion of respondents paid in-state tuition in New York

than in New Jersey, which is consistent with the policy in place. A larger proportion of respondents had to pay out-of-state tuition in New Jersey, while the proportion of those not in college was similar in the two states. Based on interviews conducted with undocumented respondents, in-state tuition in college in New Jersey often meant paying in-county tuition at a community college, which is not regulated by the state but is left to the discretion of the board of trustees of the institution. Additionally, access to in-county tuition can also be negotiated with administrators in the community colleges attend by immigrant youths, which explains the high proportion of New Jersey respondents stating that they are paying in-state tuition. As the literature has shown, lack of access to in-state tuition could constitute a serious barrier to educational attainment, and prevent immigrant youths from staying in college until graduation after they enroll. We must therefore study educational attainment among participants by status and by state, to detect any differences in attainment based on individual characteristics (immigration status) and on policy.

**Table 4.8 Educational attainment among Latino immigrant youths (% by immigration status and by state)**

Educational attainment	Documented*			State		
	Yes	No	Total	New York	New Jersey	Total
Some college	75.9	55.5	61.5	68.9	53.4	62.6
Associate's degree	18.5	29.7	26.4	24.5	26.0	25.1
Bachelor's degree	5.6	13.3	11.0	6.6	17.8	11.2
Master's degree	0.0	1.6	1.1	0.0	2.7	1.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

According to Table 4.8, we can see that immigration status did not seem to be a barrier to educational attainment since those respondents who were assumed to be undocumented reported higher levels of achievement than those who were assumed to be documented.

However, for both groups the level of educational achievement was rather low, as seen before, with over 60 percent of respondents having only completed some college, and only 1 percent having completed a Master's degree. Individual characteristics such as immigration status did not seem to have an effect on those respondents who had gone beyond two-year institutions. In addition, state policy also did not seem to have an effect on the educational attainment of those in 2-year colleges, since the proportion of New York and New Jersey respondents having achieved some college or an Associate's degree were in the same range. However, the proportion of respondents having achieved a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree was higher in New Jersey than in New York, which would lead us to assume that for those who manage to go beyond the community college level, state policy regarding access to in-state tuition does not have a major effect on educational attainment.

### *Self-esteem among immigrant youths*

The documentation of a broad sense of belonging must include a measure of respondents' self-esteem. This is necessary since one of the assumptions of this research project is that state policies send an implicit message to policy recipients and those who are excluded from participating about their consideration by the state, and their sense of deservedness. This evaluation of respondents was based on the Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1989), a widely used scale in the social sciences which helps evaluate respondents' sense of self-worth. Respondents were classified in three categories for self-esteem ranging from low (under 2.5 out of 5 possible points) to normal to high self-esteem (over 4.3 out of 5).



**Table 4.9 Self-esteem among Latino immigrant youths (% by immigration status and by state)**

Self-esteem level	Documented*			State		
	Yes	No	Total	New York	New Jersey	Total
Low	5.9	3.2	4.0	2.9	5.0	3.7
Normal	60.3	68.4	66.0	71.0	58.0	66.2
High	33.8	28.4	30.0	26.1	37.0	30.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

As we can see in Table 4.9, the majority of respondents were classified in the normal range for self-esteem. About two thirds of respondents were classified within the normal range, and a higher proportion of respondents were ranked in the high range of self-esteem than for the lower range of self-esteem. Those who were classified as having low self-esteem represented less than 5 percent of respondents, and this proportion stayed consistent across statuses and across states. However, there appear to be some differences between statuses and between states for those who had normal and high self-esteem. When looking at respondents based on their immigration status, a third of those who were documented had high self-esteem, as opposed to 28 percent for those who were undocumented. When looking at state differences, a greater proportion of respondents in the state of New York were classified as either within the normal or the higher range for self-esteem compared to New Jersey respondents. However in both cases these differences were marginal. After conducting statistical analyses of the differences in self-esteem across states and across immigration statuses, no significant difference was found between the groups.

### **Belonging among Latino immigrant youth**

The level of belonging among Latino immigrant youth was measured through several items which allowed for comparisons to be made. The survey instrument asked respondents about

their level of belonging in the United States, in their country of origin, in their neighborhood and community, as well as outside of their community at school or in the workplace. The latter measure was intended to measure the availability and creation of weak ties outside of the original community for young immigrants. To do so, respondents were also asked to describe the people who lived in their neighborhood, went to the same school or worked at the same place, and those who were their close friends. Finally, respondents were also asked to indicate their level of trust in the United States as a place where all people can succeed and get treated fairly.

*Belonging in the United States and in one's country of origin*

When dealing with belonging among immigrant youths, it is necessary to keep in mind the dual frame of reference which these youths tend to maintain. In particular, for those who may have arrived in the United States at a later age, sense of belonging may be higher in their country of origin as opposed to their host country. On the contrary, for those who have arrived very young in the United States, sense of belonging may be higher in that country than in the respondent's country of origin. Comparing the results on both items will help determine where respondents feel that they belong the most, and whether there are any differences between the two states. Table 4.10 shows the scores for belonging in the United States in New York and in New Jersey.

**Table 4.10 Belonging in the US (% by state of residence)**

<b>“I feel like I belong in the United States.”</b>	<b>State</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>New York</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	
<b>Strongly disagrees or disagrees</b>	8.3	10.5	9.1
<b>Neutral</b>	15.9	19.8	17.3
<b>Strongly agrees or Agrees</b>	75.8	69.8	73.6
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As the table above shows, there appears to be a difference between New York and New Jersey in terms of sense of belonging. Even though both groups tend to be distributed across responses in the same manner, respondents in New York agreed to the statement “I feel like I belong in the United States” in greater proportion than those in New Jersey. Additionally, a smaller proportion of New York respondents disagreed with the statement. However after conducting a t-test to investigate the difference in means across the two states, there was no significant difference in levels of belonging in the United States between New York and New Jersey respondents.

As indicated above, level of belonging in the United States can be compared to level of belonging in one’s country of origin. Table 4.11 shows the difference between the mean scores obtained overall for two different items on a scale from 1 to 5, one for belonging in the United States, and the other for belonging in one’s country of origin.

**Table 4.11 Means for belonging in the United States vs. country of origin**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Belonging in the US</b>	301	1	5	3.99
<b>Belonging in one’s country of origin</b>	297	1	5	3.34

As the table shows, the overall mean for belonging in the United States is higher than for one's country of origin. This would indicate that respondents from the metropolitan area tend to feel more at home in the United States. This could be related to earlier findings relative to the low frequency of travel to one's country of origin, or to the high level of comfort of respondents with the English language. In terms of statistically significant differences across states, the only major difference occurred relative to levels of belonging in one's country of origin. Respondents in New Jersey had a mean score of 3.08 compared to 3.45 for those in New York, on a scale from 1 to 5. T-tests were conducted and showed a significant difference between the two states on levels of belonging in one's country of origin ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that respondents in New Jersey were less likely to indicate that they felt like they belonged in their country of origin.

#### *Creation of weak ties*

In addition to comparisons between the United States and one's country of origin, it is important to take into account the environment in which immigrant youths live their daily lives, and the type of people they interact with. The creation of weak ties with groups who are dissimilar from one's group of origin is essential in youths' process of assimilation and socialization in the United States. For this purpose, the survey instrument first asked questions about respondents' sense of belonging in various locations in the United States such as where they live and in their neighborhood. These were integrated into a single measure of belonging in one's community. This item can be compared to another measure of belonging outside of the community, which is based on respondents' sense of belonging in the workplace and at school. Table 4.12 shows the mean scores obtained overall on levels of belonging both inside and outside of the community where young immigrants live.

**Table 4.12 Belonging in the community vs. outside of the community**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Belonging in the community</b>	296	1.00	5.00	3.74
<b>Belonging outside the community</b>	278	1.00	5.00	3.82

As the table above shows, the overall level of belonging among respondents was high based on a scale from 1 to 5, but it appeared to be higher for belonging in areas which were not necessarily connected to the community, such as respondents' workplaces or schools. The two measures were nevertheless lower than for belonging in the United States, which was shown above to have an overall mean of 3.99. It is therefore important to compare levels of belonging outside of the community between the two states, to see whether there is a difference between the two. Table 4.13 below shows the results for levels of belonging outside of the community based on the state of residence of respondents. As the table shows, respondents in New Jersey appear to have stronger levels of belonging at work and school than respondents in New York. A combined 81 percent of respondents in New Jersey agreed or strongly agreed that they belonged in their place of work or education, compared to 71 percent for New York respondents.

**Table 4.13 Belonging outside of the community (% by state)**

<b>"I feel like I belong at work/school."</b>	<b>State</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>New York</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	
<b>Strongly disagrees or disagrees</b>	12.1	12.7	12.3
<b>Neutral</b>	16.7	6.3	12.8
<b>Strongly agrees or Agrees</b>	71.2	81.0	74.9
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

In addition to feelings of belonging reported by respondents, it is necessary to estimate the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between them and the people around them in different environments, which may affect their overall feeling of belonging. Evaluating similarity and dissimilarity will also help confirm that the workplace and schools are actually locations where weak ties can be formed with others who do not share the same characteristics as the respondents. For the purpose of this project, similarity was established based on race, language, gender, and immigration status. The latter was only used in the case of close friends, since undocumented youth are more likely to share this information with close friends rather than with their colleagues or classmates. Respondents were asked to indicate how many of their colleagues/neighbors/close friends shared these characteristics with them. Responses were ranked from 1 (none of them) to 5 (all of them).

Table 4.14 summarizes the mean scores for similarity for the three categories. As can be seen on the table, the mean score for schoolmates and colleagues was the lowest of the three, which means that the people surrounding respondents at work and school tend to resemble respondents less than their neighbors and their close friends. Schoolmates and colleagues had a mean score of 2.96, which means that less than “some of them” shared racial, gender, and linguistic characteristics with the respondents. Close friends had the highest score for similarity, which is all the more impressive as this particular score includes immigration status in addition to other characteristics. This means that respondents’ friends tended to share the same language, the same racial and ethnic background, and tended to be immigrants as well. This shows that there is a difference between the environments in which young immigrants move back and forth, and that the workplace and school are indeed places where weak ties can be created and maintained.

**Table 4.14 Similarity with schoolmates/colleagues, neighbors, and close friends**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Schoolmates/colleagues</b>	260	1.00	5.00	2.96
<b>Neighbors</b>	262	1.00	5.00	3.09
<b>Close friends</b>	263	1.25	5.00	3.17

### *Trust in the United States*

The final element needed to establish young immigrants' levels of belonging is a measure of how much they trust the United States as a place where they can succeed. Therefore the survey instrument established a measure of their level of trust in the U.S. and in the American promise of success and equality. Trust in the United States was computed based on two items asking respondents how much they agreed with the statement that people in the U.S. are treated fairly and given equal chance, regardless of their background or race. The two measures were then computed into a single measure of trust with scores ranging from 1 to 5. The tables below present the results for trust in the United States' promise by state and by status in order to establish differences between the two groups.

**Table 4.15 Level of trust in the United States among Latino immigrant youths (% by state)**

<b>Level of trust in the U.S.</b>	<b>State</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>New York</b>	<b>New Jersey</b>	
<b>Low</b>	50.8	70.3	57.8
<b>Moderate</b>	40.7	24.3	34.8
<b>High</b>	8.5	5.4	7.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As can be seen in Table 4.15, trust in the United States tends to be low or moderate among respondents across both states. When looking at differences between the two states, a larger proportion of New Jersey participants had a low level of trust in the United States than for New Yorkers, even though among the New York respondents about half of the respondents had a low level of trust for their host country. There was also a difference between the two groups for respondents with a high level of trust in the United States, who comprised 8.5 percent of the New York group compared to 5.4 percent of those living in New Jersey. The overall mean for trust in the United States was 2.58 for immigrant youths living in New York and 2.18 for those living in New Jersey. After comparing the means through a t-test, which is a statistical examination of two population means, it appeared that there is a statistically significant difference in trust levels across the two states ( $p < .05$ ). Place plays a role in the social and political incorporation of immigrant youths, as their experience at the state level may affect their overall perspective on what the United States has to offer them for the future. It is therefore crucial to take trust in the United States into account when looking at factors which affect belonging in the United States, since immigrants' experiences at the local level may affect their views of the entire country.

When comparing groups across states the assumption is that the policies of the state affect one's level of belonging. However immigrant youths are also under the influence of federal immigration policies which may restrict their educational, work, and travel opportunities. It is thus necessary to look at level of trust in the United States according to the immigration status of respondents, which can shed a light on how immigrants of various immigration statuses experience different policies. Table 4.16 below shows the results for level of trust in the United States by status.



**Table 4.16 Level of trust in the United States among immigrant youth (% by immigration status)**

Level of trust	Status		Total
	Documented	Undocumented*	
<b>Low</b>	46.3	64.5	58.7
<b>Moderate</b>	43.3	29.8	34.1
<b>High</b>	10.4	5.7	7.2
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*Status estimated based on visa at arrival

This table confirms that level of trust in the United States tends to be very low among respondents. This is the case across states of residence, as has been seen above, but also across immigration status, as can be seen in Table 4.16. Those who were undocumented were much less likely than those who were documented to trust the United States as a place where people get fair treatment and equal chances. Almost two-thirds of undocumented respondents had a low level of trust in the United States, compared to less than half of documented respondents. The proportion of those with a high level of trust was low in both groups (only about 10 percent among the documented respondents), but the proportion of those with high levels of trust among documented immigrants was double that of undocumented immigrants. The overall mean for trust in the United States was 2.65 for documented respondents and 2.32 for those who were undocumented. After comparing the means of both groups through a t-test, it appeared that there is a statistically significant difference in trust levels across immigration statuses ( $p < .05$ ). Federal policies play a role in the political integration of immigrants by granting some immigrant youths more security and more opportunities than others. As a consequence, those who are given these opportunities are more likely to trust the United States as a place where anyone can succeed, while those who are left out may keep their doubts toward the promises of the American Dream.

## Experiences with education

This project seeks to compare two states based on their policies regarding access to in-state tuition for some undocumented youths. Participants in the project were therefore asked about their educational experience in high school, college, as well as about their education aspirations and expectations.

### *Experiences in high school*

High school experience was measured based on several items, which were then added together so as to obtain a score for high school achievement out of 4 points. High school experience included receiving awards, participating in extra-curricular activities, holding leadership positions, doing community service and working while in high school. These items were chosen because of their relationship with preparation for college and with civic and political engagement later in life. As the literature has shown, those who are engaged in high school tend to remain engaged as adults. Since the last item (working in high school) was considered as a barrier to high school achievement, participants who worked in high school had a point deducted from their overall high school achievement score. As a consequence, possible scores ranged from -1 to 4.

**Table 4.17 High school achievement among Latino immigrant youths (% by state)**

	High school achievement score						Total
	-1.00	.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
<b>New York</b>	2.8	9.1	18.2	28.7	35.7	5.6	100.0
<b>New Jersey</b>	2.4	6.0	6.0	25.0	52.4	8.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	2.6	7.9	13.7	27.3	41.9	6.6	100.0

As the table above shows, most of the respondents achieved rather highly in high school. More than half of the respondents in New Jersey had a score of at least 3, and less than 10 percent had a score of zero or lower. For New York respondents, the trend was the same, but respondents were more evenly distributed than in New Jersey. Overall, there are no significant differences in high school achievement between the two states. However, because the items asked for overall high school experience, and not by year in high school, it was not possible to measure the occurrence of a potential “junior/sophomore” crash (Smith, 2013) experienced by some respondents in high school when they learn they may not qualify for in-state tuition, as could have been the case in New Jersey. This “crash” was nevertheless described during interviews with undocumented respondents, as later chapters will demonstrate.

### *College experience*

Before evaluating the college experience of Latino immigrant youth, it is necessary to establish the type of institutions which they attend. The diversity of choices in higher education has several consequences for college students. First, financial considerations may direct high school graduates toward more affordable institutions such as community colleges. This is an even more attractive solution for undocumented youths in New Jersey since they are more likely to be able to negotiate in-county tuition rates with these institutions than in-state tuition rates at public universities in the state. However, enrolling in a two-year institution lengthens the time-to-degree and places a great burden on the student at the time of transfer. Table 4.18 shows the type of institutions in which respondents who were in college were enrolled.

**Table 4.18 Type of institution attended by Latino immigrant youths (% by state)**

Type of institution	State		Total
	New York	New Jersey	
Not in college	3.4	5.1	4.1
Vocational training	0.8	3.8	2.0
Community college	76.5	43.6	63.5
4-year public university	16.8	30.8	22.3
4-year private university	0.8	9.0	4.1
Graduate / Law school	1.7	7.7	4.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As the table above shows, the majority of participants who attend college do so either in a community college or in a 4-year public university. Respondents in New Jersey who attended a private 4-year institution were likely to be undocumented, as interviews with undocumented youths in that state showed that private institutions often constitute a solution for them to attend college in a Bachelor-granting institution, since these institutions can offer them financial support. As the educational attainment shown earlier had indicated, a very small proportion of respondents were attending college in a graduate program or law school. This indicates that there may be some barriers for Latino immigrant youths who wish to pursue their education beyond community college, even for those who obtain a Bachelor's degree.

Additionally, attending college full-time or part-time plays a role in the experience of college students and in their ability to graduate on time. Among the participants in the study, there was a higher proportion of college students enrolled full time in the state of New York, where almost 85 percent of those in college were enrolled full-time, compared to 78 percent of college students in New Jersey. College experience among respondents was measured through items similar to the ones used for high school experience. An overall score out of 5 points was

based on whether respondents had received awards in college, participated in extra-curricular activities, held leadership positions, went to college full time, and were engaged in community service. Table 4.19 displays the results for college experience among respondents, by state.

**Table 4.19 College experience among Latino immigrant youths (% by state)**

	College experience score						
	.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	Total
<b>New York</b>	8.0	42.9	24.1	9.8	9.8	5.4	100.0
<b>New Jersey</b>	6.6	14.5	18.4	14.5	26.3	19.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	7.4	31.4	21.8	11.7	16.5	11.2	100.0

Overall, the mean score for college experience was higher for New Jersey (2.9 out of 5) than for New York (1.9). As it appears from the table above, respondents in New Jersey were more widely distributed across scores whereas New York respondents were concentrated in the low and moderate scores of 1 and 2. About a third of New Jersey respondents had scores that were quite high, 4 and 5 out of 5, which seems to go against the hypotheses on which this project is based. It appears that state of residence, and therefore the policies of the state, do not have an effect on the college experience of respondents. Nevertheless, this does not mean that there are no barriers to high achievement in college, as the low scores from New York seem to indicate. These low scores however may not be due to policy, but to individual characteristics such as parental socio-economic characteristics and linguistic assimilation.

### *Educational aspirations and expectations*

The final item for comparing educational experience combined with levels of belonging comes from respondents' educational aspirations and expectations. This type of measure allows us to gain an understanding of the level of self-confidence displayed by respondents, but also of

their perceived ability to pursue their goals in the future. The goal of such a measure is to look for a discrepancy between the two values which would indicate that respondents are not confident that they can reach their educational goals.

Respondents were asked to indicate how far they would like to go in college (aspirations), and then how far they thought they would go in college (expectations). This expectation is based on their own educational experience, the policies in place in the state which could be perceived as potential barriers to education, and also on their knowledge of the college system. Table 4.20 below shows the results for the difference between their aspirations and their expectations. Scores range from negative 2, which indicate that the respondent's aspirations were lower than their expectations, to 4, which indicate a 4-point discrepancy where respondent's aspirations are higher than their expectations. A score of zero indicates that there is no difference between educational aspirations and expectations.

As the table shows, the majority of respondents had a score of zero, which indicate that most participants believe that they will reach the educational goals that they have set out for themselves. This is the case across immigration statuses and across states. For those cases where a difference existed between education aspiration and expectation, the difference was most likely positive, meaning that respondents did not believe that they would reach their educational goals, but instead settle for a lower college achievement. Over a quarter of respondents showed this type of difference. However, respondents who were undocumented and those who lived in New Jersey showed higher proportion of positive differences than respondents who were documented and who lived in the state of New York. This means that undocumented respondents and New Jersey respondents were less likely to believe that they could reach their educational goals than others. Limitations due to immigration status and lack of access to in-state tuition certainly place high barriers in terms of educational achievement.

This type of measures shows the internalization of these barriers by some of the participants in the survey as it affects their ability to make plans for the future.

**Table 4.20 Difference in educational aspirations and expectations among Latino immigrant youths (% by immigration status and by state)**

Difference aspiration-expectation	Documented			State		
	Yes	No*	Total	New York	New Jersey	Total
-2.00	0.0	1.9	1.3	0.7	2.4	1.3
-1.00	4.3	5.7	5.2	6.4	3.5	5.3
.00 (no difference)	77.1	61.0	65.9	67.1	64.7	66.2
1.00	12.9	22.0	19.2	17.1	22.4	19.1
2.00	5.7	8.8	7.9	7.9	7.1	7.6
3.00	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
4.00	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* status estimated based on visa at arrival

### Factors affecting levels of belonging

The research objective of this project is to understand what factors affect levels of belonging among Latino immigrant youths living in the same metropolitan area but in two different states. In this chapter the results focus on the traditional understanding of belonging, which is based on measures of assimilation and feelings of belonging among respondents. To ascertain the elements which affect belonging, a linear regression was computed using sense of belonging in the United States as an outcome variable, and based on independent variables such as age at arrival, enrollment in college, state of residence, experience with discrimination, and level of trust in the American Dream. The model shown in Table 4.21 below looks at the effect of these variables young Latino immigrants' sense of belonging in the United States.

**Table 4.21 Factors affecting sense of belonging in the U.S. among Latino immigrant youth**

Variables	Beta
(Constant)	4.102***
Age at arrival in the U.S.	-.243***
State of residence - NJ	-.011
Experience with discrimination	-.075
Trust in the American Dream	.266***
Enrolled in college	-.034
$R^2 = .11; F(5, 219) = 5.405***; ***p \leq .001$	

As seen in the table above, age at arrival and trust in the American Dream are significant predictors of belonging in the United States. Age at arrival affects sense of belonging in a negative way, meaning that respondents who move to the United States are likely to experience lower levels of belonging. For each year added to the age of participants at the time of their arrival in the United States, there is a .24 decrease in their average sense of belonging. Additionally, believing that the United States is a place where everyone, no matter their background, gets treated fairly and is given equal chances is positively affecting sense of belonging. For each unit increase in the level of trust in the American Dream among respondents, there is a .27 increase in their average sense of belonging in the United States. On the other hand, state of residence and enrollment in college do not seem to have significant effects on sense of belonging. This means that state policies and access to college may be less important in altering sense of belonging than time spent in the country or individual experiences which would lead to greater trust in the United States.

## Conclusion

In establishing a comprehensive sense of belonging among Latino immigrant youths, it is necessary to associate traditional measures of assimilation, measures of belonging, and



experiences with education. Respondents from the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey displayed high levels of linguistic assimilation, moderate ties to their country of origin. They were also characterized by a high proportion of college enrollment but low levels of educational attainment in college, even for the oldest group of immigrants who were over the age of 26. In terms of measures of belonging, most respondents had higher levels of belonging in the United States than in their country of origin. Results showed that they were able to create ties with people outside of their communities through work and school, and experienced higher levels of belonging outside of their community compared to within their community. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents displayed low levels of trust in the United States, especially among those who were undocumented and those who lived in New Jersey. When looking at the educational experience of Latino immigrant participants, results indicated strong achievement in high school and high levels of enrollment in college. However, most of those who took the survey were concentrated in community colleges. Additionally, a quarter of respondents showed a large discrepancy between their educational aspirations and expectations, once again especially among those who were undocumented and those who were living in New Jersey.

Finally, even though respondents from New Jersey experienced lower levels of trust in the United States, state of residence did not appear to affect sense of belonging significantly. In fact, sense of belonging among respondents was mostly affected by individual-level characteristics such as how old they were when they arrived in the United States and their level of trust in the American Dream, rather than by where they lived or their participation in “avenues of inclusion” such as institutions of higher education.

## **Chapter 5: Undocumented youth and belonging**

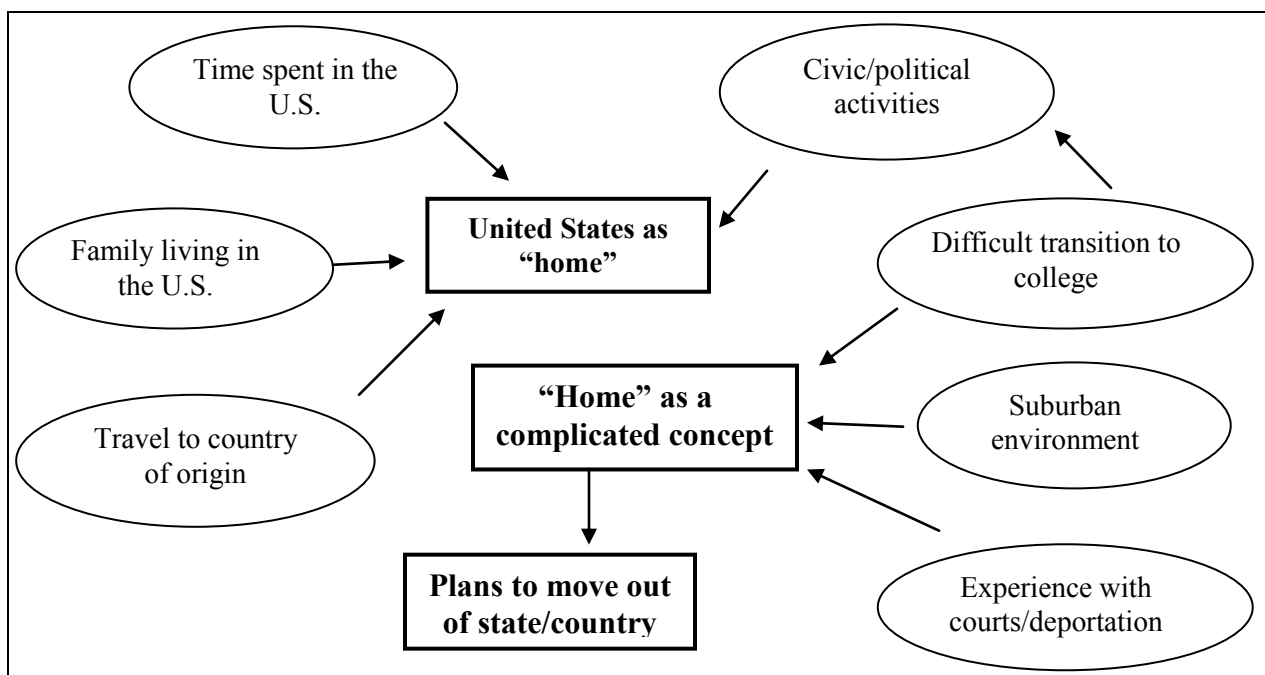
The question asked by the project was whether there is a difference in levels of belonging between undocumented youths living in two states, New York and New Jersey, who have adopted different policies toward their access to college. The responses show that even though the majority of the respondents thought of the United States as their home, those who had grown up in New York were more likely to plan their future lives in New York compared to those who had grown up in New Jersey, who were more likely to consider moving out of state. Some of the differences which emerged from the sample were related to the type of environment in which the respondents had grown up in – rural, suburban, or urban – and to their level of civic and political involvement. The latter particularly played a role in these youths' levels of belonging at the group level. Activists were more likely to identify with a large group of immigrants, including older undocumented immigrants, in the context of immigration reform, while non-activists were more likely to associate themselves with young undocumented students' claims toward citizenship.

### **The United States as “home”**

The interviews were designed to investigate respondents' sense of belonging in the United States and in their state of residence. They were therefore asked to describe what “home” is to them, and whether they plan on moving within the next five to ten years. The goal was to investigate if there are any differences between New York and New Jersey in terms of levels of belonging. A secondary goal was to broaden the scope of the concept of belonging by adding

measures of civic engagement and political mobilization. The assumption behind that goal is that these types of activities can foster a stronger attachment to one's home place, or on the contrary increase alienation due to greater exposure to restrictive policies. Figure 1 below illustrates the main factors affecting sense of "home" in the United States among undocumented youths, which will be discussed in the next two sections.

**Figure 5.1 Smoothed causal network for sense of "home" among undocumented youths**



### *Defining "Home"*

Most of the undocumented youths who participated in the interviews feel at home not only in the United States, but also in their state of residence, whether New York or New Jersey. This is due to the fact that many of them have spent most of their lives in the United States after arriving at a young age. When asked, "Do you feel at home in New Jersey?" Claudia (NJ) answers: "Yes, because I don't know anywhere else." She moved to the United States twenty

years ago, when she was six years old. Elias, also from New Jersey, provides a similar answer. Home is “Union City. The people there have seen me grow up.” For Omar, the answer was clear: “I’m American, New Jersey-based.” A similar state of mind can be found among undocumented youths who have grown up in the New York side of the metropolitan area. Joel (NY), who moved to New York when he was five years old, explains that he feels at home in New York because “I guess I grew up here, I know a lot more about here than there, than Mexico.” However he does insist on the difference between feeling “at home” in a particular place and “being” from somewhere: “at the same time I like saying that I was born in Mexico City. I like saying that too. [...] I still say that I was born there, I’m from there.” Thus the concept of home is a complex one, and is often attached to the place of origin of the respondent, even if they have not traveled there in years.

One of the key differences between the two samples comes the exceptionality of the location in which the New York sample had moved. Many of the respondents in that state seemed to use New York State and New York City alternatively as if talking about the same place, therefore associating their “home” with a unique location in terms of immigration and immigrant opportunity rather than with the state as a whole. When asking Patricia (NY) if she considers New York to be her home now, she explains that “being in New York City allows you to have this window into the rest of the world.” Laughing, she questions the likelihood that she will move elsewhere in the U.S. because of the exceptionality of the city: “I guess you get used to New York, and you think New York is the center of the world!” When I asked Juan (NY) how New York laws affecting immigrants compared to those of other states, he immediately focused on the city rather than the state: “I mean New York is made of immigrants, there are people from all over the world. [...] I know more about New York City!” This is consistent with findings from the study on the second generation of immigrants in New

York City, who tend to assimilate as New Yorkers rather than Americans (Kasinitz et al., 2008).

Interestingly, those respondents from the metropolitan area who had grown up outside of New York City gave responses which resembled those from New Jersey respondents, who had grown up in suburban areas and experiencing similar levels of isolation and potential alienation at school. Roberto (NY), who grew up in the suburbs north of New York City and experienced high levels of segregation throughout his K-12 education, does not feel the necessity to stay in New York over the next few years: “it’s all I’ve ever known and recently I’ve started to consider moving, especially after my family is gone, I don’t have much to tie me to New York except them and my friends. [...] Right now I would say, yes I would be more than happy to move to somewhere like Austin.” Most respondents who indicated a desire to move were making plans for two main reasons. They would either move to attend a specific school, most likely a graduate program or a law school, or they would move to a state which they considered better suited for their needs. Hugo (NJ), from New Jersey, is planning to move to California or New York, “because [he knows] there is a lot of Hispanic people there.” Even though he did find his own state of residence – New Jersey – a comfortable state to live in, he did not find there what he wanted to settle indefinitely.

### *Alienating Experiences*

Not all respondents showed high levels of comfort in living in the United States. In fact, some undocumented youths indicated a high sense of alienation from the United States or from their state of residence. This was most likely the case among respondents who had moved at a later age, or who had struggled to adapt to the educational system. Alejandro (NY) moved to the United States when he was four, yet now at 25 he is planning to move back to Mexico when

he graduates college. He considers finishing his education in Mexico: “[The universities are] public too, so I don’t have to worry about paying. Hopefully I just get a scholarship.” The experience with policies denying financial aid and access to loans, even for those who qualify for in-state tuition, has made the college experience a stressful one for a large group of young immigrants. In many cases, undocumented youths in New York have to balance work and classes, and therefore take longer to graduate. For Ivan (NJ), who moved from Ecuador when he was 14, moving was a bittersweet experience and he expresses “mixed feelings” about attending school in the United States: “I was never pushed by my guidance counselor to do more than I should have. I ended up taking an Honors class [...] but it was my own initiative.” He ended up attending college out of state after securing large funding from a private foundation to which he had applied because “[he] was getting desperate.”

Financial concerns, not only for oneself but for the family, tend to take priority over personal development. Ivan (NJ) postponed his plans to pursue a doctorate “until [his] siblings are done with their stuff [...] and start contributing as opposed to being a financial burden.” When asked about his future, he plans to be “in the Northeast”, but he wants to develop initiatives in Ecuador to try to bridge “the knowledge here and the resources over there. [...] As I have grown, I have seen the value of staying connected with my roots.” In the case of these respondents, increase in time spent in the United States had not necessarily led to an increase in comfort in their host country. On the contrary, more time spent in the U.S. seemed to have provided more opportunities to experience the effect of policies barring access to public goods enjoyed by most people their age, like access to college and to better job opportunities. These respondents were more likely to imagine their future in relation to their country of origin, either because they would move back there permanently, or because they would develop transnational work projects that would benefit the economy of these other countries.

So what constitutes “home” for these undocumented youths? Sense of home was related to different elements based on the length of time that the respondent had spent in the United States. Those who had arrived to the United States before age 5 tended to call the United States “home” because it was where they had spent the majority of their lives, and knew nothing or very little of their country of origin. On the other hand, those who had arrived to the United States at a later age still called it their home because it was either where their family was also living or because this is where they were envisioning their future. Interestingly, those who had spent less time in the United States and still considered it their home were likely to explain their connection in terms of their engagement, either culturally, economically, or civically, into the country. Juan (NY), who has lived in the United States for eight years and whose parents have actually moved back to Mexico, explains how he sees his future: “I love New York City, I’m a city boy [he laughs], so I don’t think I would move to another country or to another city. I think New York is my life, so I will still be living here.” He is very involved in his community and plans to remain so in the future, but his focus is primarily on the community, rather than the United States or New York State. When asked why immigrant youths should be involved, he answered: “they have the time to be involved in the community and know what is happening, and they can transfer that information to their parents. [...] I think there are a lot of things that are happening in the community that some people don’t know about.”

Activism brings about many benefits, such as increased knowledge about one’s rights and how to help the community. For Hugo (NJ), being involved helped him with English, with knowing more about his rights, and about opportunities available. He explains that he did not know much about in-state tuition policies in other states “until I got into this campaign though. Because all I knew was that if you were undocumented, you had to pay out-of-state tuition or international tuition. I thought that was in all the US.” Thus high levels of civic engagement

and political participation can make undocumented youths more attached to where they live, but can also increase their ability to perceive differential treatments between states in terms of access to higher education.

A good sense of what constitutes one's home can be gained by their desire to move and settle in another state. Respondents in New York States tended to envision their future in their current state of residence in larger proportion than those who were living in New Jersey. This can be explained by the greater density of immigrant networks on the New York City side of the metropolitan area, and the ability to feel welcome as an immigrant anywhere in the city. Jose (NY), a 19-year old youth from Honduras, plans on staying in New York even though his mother, who is also undocumented, plans on moving: "I don't see myself in another place. [...] I want to make my life here, you know? I want my future here." Leticia (NY), who is still worried about raids and the possibility of being deported back to Mexico, hopes that she can stay in New York: "I would like to stay here, and I would like to get my... legal life here."

Most of the New Jersey respondents who planned on moving indicated their willingness to do so to pursue greater opportunities, most of the time because they wanted to attend school in another state. Graciela (NJ), a 23-year old who is about to graduate from a 4-year public university, is now considering moving, at least for a few years: "I am trying to go to school probably in another state. For law school. [...] New York City or Washington DC. I'm still debating." Another student, Inez (NJ) who is currently attending a community college also makes plans for the future that do not involve New Jersey. When asked if she would still live there in five or ten years, she says: "First, I want to say no. [...] I picture myself living someplace else. Maybe close, maybe New York, but not in the same town where I lived before. If it is five years from now, I will still be in [...] whatever med school I end up going to." This could be one of the consequences of access to in-state tuition in New York as opposed to out-



of-state tuition in New Jersey. Respondents in the latter state were much more likely to look for educational opportunities out of state because the financial burden of attending school far away would not be significantly different from staying in the state.

On the contrary, New York respondents were much more cautious in their approach to transferring to a 4-year university or graduate school, restricting their choices to those institutions which would grant them in-state tuition, or establishing precarious financial arrangements. For example Yanelly (NY) was very careful in her choice of colleges when she finished high school: “In some schools, you can’t even get past the first step of the application, because they ask for social security number. You know, I don’t even remember if [my school, a CUNY senior college] asked for it. I think they did not, that’s how I got past it.” She specifically picked a school that was part of the City University of New York because she knew then that status would not be a problem for registering. Roberto (NY) and his high school guidance counselors spent hours researching private funding so he could go to college. He was finally accepted into an Honors Program of the CUNY system and benefitted from private donations. But when transferring to graduate school, finances became more complicated: “I got a small grant from them. So for last semester, which was \$23,000, I got about 8, almost \$9000. And I had saved up maybe another 6000 or 7000 [...] so it was a little under \$11,000. So I took that out in private loans.” However after attending full time for one semester, Roberto (NY) now has to attend his graduate program part-time so he has enough time to save money to pay for school: “I tried to do it full-time my first semester, and that was hell.” Obviously, straying out of the public system makes attending graduate school very difficult for undocumented youths, even for those who have managed to secure some private funding and benefitted from honors program.

*Belonging and civic/political engagement*

The goal of this project is to understand the role of civic and political engagement in fostering a sense of belonging and attachment in undocumented youths' state of residence or in the United States. The interviews indicate that those who plan to move back to their country of origin – or who have considered moving back at some point in their life – tend to be less involved civically and politically than their peers. For Carla (NJ) from Honduras, moving back to her country of origin seemed like the only option after high school: “I told my mom. I was like, it’s pointless. Even if I go to school, I’m not going to be able to work, so what’s the point?” It was not until she applied for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival that she finally considered staying in the United States. Carla (NJ) is not a member of any youth organization, but is a member of a youth church group. Even though these types of group often provide the opportunity to share with other undocumented youths, they do not necessarily encourage them to take action. Most of the time, plans to move back to their country of origin comes from a sense of alienation and depression. Virgilio (NJ), from Peru, was taken to court with his family and put under an order of deportation when he was 15, after being in the country for over 8 years. He and his twin brother realized later that year that their undocumented status prevented them from obtaining financial aid: “And it just never hits you that since you’re illegal, you’re not going to be able to go to college or ever do something worthy in America. And then I realized this, and I was like, wow, why are we here? Why don’t people just stay in Peru where we actually have opportunities rather than come here?” Most undocumented youths who consider moving back do so because of the limitations that they experience in the United States, especially in terms of access to college. Virgilio, just like Carla, is not involved in the undocumented students’ movement.

On the other hand, those who are highly involved tend to describe themselves in terms of “American-ness” and to identify with American political culture more than with the culture of their country of origin. This is the case when it comes to seeing themselves as worthy of public goods, but also in terms of racial relations and gender roles. Omar (NJ) has become heavily involved with the movement over the years. When asked if he keeps up with the politics in Peru, his country of origin, his response is definite: “No, not at all. I’m American, New Jersey-based.” His goal for the future is to stay in New Jersey and organize his community. He has even put school on hold so he can work full time on the tuition equality campaign in that state. For Yanelly (NY), her identification with the United States became even more apparent when her family decided to move back to Mexico: “I really identify with American culture and with the education here. I actually attempted school in Mexico for two months. [...] I started third grade here, but then my family thought that we were going to move back. So we went back and they enrolled me, but [we] did not identify with Mexican culture anymore. It just was not for us anymore.” Identifying with American culture can help undocumented youths in their mobilization efforts. For Patricia (NY), her education put her through “the whole culture shock and the cultural differences between Latin American countries and the traditions of what a woman’s role is supposed to be, as opposed to what we have here” in the United States. [...] I was sort of rebelling against that I guess.” In explaining the issues that the undocumented youth movement pursues, she broadens the range from simply pursuing immigration reform to also empowering women and LGBTQ youths. Those who are highly engaged adopt those elements of American political culture which help them make claims on the government.

Civic and political engagement tends to create a “stake” for undocumented youths, and therefore invites them to imagine their future within their host country rather than return to their country of origin. Political mobilization also promotes positive feedback which creates a

more inclusive narrative in which these youths see themselves as part of the American community. Positive feedback is related to having gained access to similar resources as their documented or citizen peers, the ability to discuss issues with elected officials and having gained greater public status in spite of their legal situation. Omar (NJ) explains how the tuition equality campaign changed strategy after the movement obtained a supportive resolution from the city council in Jersey City: “So some teams are starting to move in to replicate the whole city Council resolution form of support. So they are going to be contacted their city Council members from their respective towns.” The resolution in Jersey City gave positive media coverage to the tuition equity campaign, and allowed these youths to start gaining control over the public narrative associated with this policy.

Positive feedback also comes from one of the most crucial steps in undocumented youths’ activism, which is their participation in “coming out” events, where they share their stories and their anxieties about their status. Publicly identifying oneself as an undocumented immigrant often goes against their own education and their parents’ wishes. For Yanelly (NY) “coming out” was a scary experience, and her parents were worried about it: “my parents say to be careful. Like, be careful, always. Be careful who you tell, who’s doing it, where, who hears you. At first, I was scared.” However her parents had told her guidance counselor in high school so that their daughter could receive proper help in transitioning to college. Parents in New Jersey tended to be much stricter about disclosing status. In Alba’s (NJ) family, her younger brother still does not know that he is undocumented, even though his sister is starting to be involved. In Jesus’ (NJ) case, his older sister told their guidance counselor in high school about their status, so he could help them out with college: “My sister told him, which was like a huge thing in my family. [...] My parents were not happy with that. I think everyone is just

really uninformed about what could happen or what might happen, so they end up taking the safe way of not telling anyone.”

While not telling anyone about status can give parents a sense of security, it can prevent their children from learning about college opportunities. Virgilio (NJ) = made a conscious choice to tell his guidance counselor about his status, unlike some of his friends: “I realized that I needed help. So I had to reach out to someone. I could not just be quiet, and be like, oh my God I am an immigrant, I have to hide it from everybody!” For many youths, “coming out” brings with it a sense of empowerment and of belonging in a community of peers, who share their experience and understand their unique positions. For Yanelly (NY), coming out is the first step towards empowerment: “When you feel a sense of community that everyone connects with, when you share this burden, you start to feel a little bit more comfortable. You feel more understood. You feel like there are more people like you were going through the same thing. So I guess in a way, community kind of empowers you, and it gives you more courage to stand together.”

In New Jersey, coming out was associated with greater psychological benefits, and respondents explained how they progressively “discovered” a community around them that they had no idea existed before. Giuliana (NJ) and Alba (NJ) attended the same high school a few years apart from each other. All of Alba’s friends were documented, which made her feel “very alone.” However the staff at their school realized the importance of addressing undocumented students’ needs. Giuliana (NJ) explains that the school staff decided to share information among themselves, and “bring us information about schools and scholarships. They put us all together, all of the students that were undocumented, because they started figuring out who was and who wasn’t.” She explains that this process helped them figure out which schools were accessible, and which scholarships they could apply to. Alba (NJ), who

was already in community college, displays mixed feelings about this development, and a deeper sense of alienation: “I was envious. I was jealous of them. I was like, you have people that you can rely on, you can count on each other, and I had nobody!”

In New Jersey, the sense of isolation among undocumented youths seemed more acute than in New York, where respondents knew there was a community of undocumented immigrants surrounding them, even if they could not identify particular individuals as undocumented. For Alejandra (NJ), knowing that her friends were going through the same issues in applying to college provided a way move forward rather than abandon hope: “There were times when we would cry together. It was tough. We all went through it together. [...] We [were] basically trying to find a way to give each other hope that it’s going to get better.” As such, “coming out” in New Jersey helped create a community in which undocumented youths were the main actors, and where they could attempt to take control of their future. This increased level of civic engagement and political activity helps undocumented youths create their own community and overcome the severe sense of alienation which is created by their de facto exclusion from college.

### **“Home” as a complicated concept**

#### *An ambivalent relationship with the US*

Even though the vast majority of respondents considered the United States to be their home, a significant portion of them also had issues when picking a single country as their “home”. In spite of the fact that most viewed themselves as permanently settled in the United States, many respondents appeared reluctant to pick a single country as the place where they belonged. It is necessary to understand which types of connections are maintained with their countries of origin, and what elements of the host country may foster more tenuous ties.

The first difference comes from the respondents' inability to pick a unique as their home. Many of them rephrased the question "What do you now consider your home?" into "Where am I from?" For those respondents, "home" meant both where they were currently living and their country or origin. For example Roman (NY) brought up the experience of his parents, whom he feels are more isolated than he is in the United States due to their lack of command of English, and how this has prevented him from feeling at home there: "I have an accent, or can't pronounce some kind of word, because I never actually put myself into actually learning English. Like in my house, I speak Spanish. [...] Sometimes I don't feel that I'm actually American, because I don't have that New York accent. So you know, I'm here and there." In this case, the inability to blend in completely with the mainstream made Roman feel as if he did not completely belong in the United States.

Others emphasize their need to maintain ties to the home country, or to a place where they have lived before, in order to call some place "home". For example, Hugo (NJ) stated that "when people ask me, 'where are you from?' I just like to say, take a guess. And whatever they say first, I'll say 'yeah, I'm from there'. Because I don't really consider myself from anywhere. I've been all over the place." Hugo was born in Ecuador and then moved to Spain, only to move back to Ecuador for a few years before moving to the United States at age 13. His demeanor when explaining this was rather downcast. On the other hand, Cecilia (NY) offered a much more positive perspective on the possibility to belong in multiple places at once: "we pretty much like it here. I... honestly consider New York my home, better than Mexico. Even though I was born there and I consider myself Mexican, but truly, truly, I enjoy myself here more than anywhere else." Thus from this perspective it is perfectly possible to have a dual identity, one that embraces Mexican citizenship but also the United States as a permanent place of residence.

The second reason for the lack of belonging fully in the United States comes from the experiences of undocumented youths and their families in their host country, which may have led them to focus on the need to maintain ties with their country of origin. During her interview, Alicia (NY) explained that she and her brother have two different perspectives on the United States. She primarily considers herself Mexican, but does not plan on moving back to Mexico. Instead she would move to California, because she has family there. She is currently working full time to pay for her community college, something which her family is very proud of. However, after seeing her struggle to pay her way through community college, her younger brother has dropped out of high school and has gone straight to work to help support the family: “my brother, he says we don’t belong here.” When asked if she thought *she* belonged in the U.S., her answer was vague: “Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don’t.” Their relationship with the country appeared to be directly affected by the policies in place in their state, which made their access to college more difficult than for their peers because they could not qualify for financial aid. On the other side of the Hudson River, Virgilio (NJ), who is currently attending college on a full scholarship, is still hesitant to call the United States home. As a high school student he and his family were called to court and placed under an order of deportation. He has interacted with the courts and immigration officers multiple times, and explained that until he gained his deferred action status, he did not feel safe in the United States. When asked what he considered his home, his answer showed the complex process of belonging for some undocumented youths: “that’s a tough one, because when people asked me where I’m from, I told them, ‘I’m Peruvian, I am not American’. But I have lived here for such a long time, so I feel like I am just lying to myself. Because I lived in Peru for seven years, and sure I had a great time, but I was so young that I barely remember it. And here I have lived most of my life now, so I guess I consider this home, but I feel like I have a backup home in Peru. If nothing



goes right here, I can just go there. But this is home for me.” In his case, even though he has made it to college, the United States is not considered a stable home because things may go wrong, and therefore a “backup” is necessary. State policies and federal immigration policies thus combine to affect undocumented youth’ perception of where they belong. Identifying a home can also be affected by the possible negative view of the United States in contrast to one’s positive view of their country of origin. Antonio (NY), expressed a feeling that was widely shared by respondents regarding other immigrants who had become “too American”, and had lost their ambition: “you can interact with different people, like Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, but when they have been in the United States for a long time they have a different mentality. Like a different... how can I describe it? Like where you’re coming from, you see people differently. You can say it’s quiet and peaceful, and when you get here you live through the opposite, you’re in an adventure of ... alcohol, drugs, and it goes on and on and on.” In this case, sense of belonging was made all the more impossible due to the fact that the context of reception offered less peacefulness and a diminished sense of security compared to the country of origin.

There are some characteristics which these respondents share, which may also lead them to experience a weaker sense of belonging in the United States. These are respondents who tend to be less involved in civic and political activities than others. All of them expressed their inability to be fully involved in any movement, even if they would like to be, because of the responsibilities they carry in the home or because they need to work in order to pay for their education. Alicia (NY) for example, tries to be part of organizations where she can do community service with her friends, but often misses meetings due to her work schedule: “it is still hard for me to try to meet up with my club mates. So they’ll say, ‘you missed the meeting.’ And I’m like, ‘I know, sorry but I just came out of work.’ Because they make the meetings at 7

PM, and I work, I go to school.” Age at arrival did not seem to matter in this respect, since these respondents varied greatly in how old they were when they moved to the United States: Roman was three years old, Virgilio and Alicia were seven, Cecilia was eleven, Hugo was thirteen and Antonio was fifteen. Therefore more time spent in the United States does not necessarily lead to a greater sense of belonging in the host country.

### *My home vs. my country*

In addition to a complicated relationship with the United States, many respondents referred to their country of origin as “my country”, even though they thought of New York or New Jersey as their home. This often came up in the context of a comparison between the United States and their country of origin, or in mentioning a personal experience before they had moved. Beatriz (NY) for example explained that she was overall satisfied with the education she had received in the United States, and illustrated it by saying that “it was good [...] much better than the education they give in my country”. She considers New York to be her home for now, but is planning to move out of state in the future, probably in California where other members of her family live. Alicia (NY), who moved to the United States when she was 7, and therefore completed the majority of her education there, also compared her experience in Mexico and in the U.S. and her lack of knowledge about the Mexican education system by using these terms: “I mean, in Mexico I started prekindergarten and everything, but I don’t really have that much memory to see what it was [...] that much different from education here. I grew up in here, and I went to all those schools here, so... I know everything about here instead of my country, how bad is that?” Here she expresses a certain degree of guilt due to the fact that she knows more about the educational system of the U.S. than about the system in Mexico. This is consistent with the lack of sense of belonging that she had expressed above.

Living alone in the United States or moving at a later age can also be associated with considering a country of origin as one's country. In that case, the respondent may not have spent enough time to consider the United States as their own country, or may maintain strong ties with family left behind. Antonio (NY) moved to the United States at the age of 15, and even though he is married and has a child born in the United States, he has a hard time considering it as his home because his family is still in Mexico. When asked if he considers New York as his home, he answers: "partly, and in part not. I can tell you that, because I've been here for ten years already, I feel like this is my home, part of my home, but when I call my parents and I see pictures and things like that, my memory goes back to 'where is my country?'" In his sense, home and country can be two separate concepts, each associated with different memories and different purposes. In the case of Hugo (NJ), who does not identify his "home" anywhere, he still considers Ecuador as his country. When asked about the political system in the United States and in Ecuador, he answered: "I think they are both corrupt. They both are. However, I see that my country is doing better than the US." There was no clear difference in the characteristics of respondents who used the terms "my country" in terms of level of involvement or length of time spent in the United States. Most of the time, the term was simply used to describe a difference in educational system, political system, or in economic development between the United States and another country.

### *Moving back and giving back*

Even though the interview protocol did not originally ask respondents if they would consider moving back to their country of origin, a large number of them mentioned this possibility and it must be discussed here. Most of those who thought about moving back, or who are currently considering it, are doing so because of the lack of opportunities in the United

States associated with their status. Those who are simply thinking about it, or have thought about it in the past, do so because they have seen family members and friends move back. Therefore leaving the United States can become, or be perceived by undocumented youth as the only viable option for pursuing educational and economic opportunities.

In New Jersey, the possibility of returning to one's country of origin was strongly associated with the lack of access to college, or to the job market. Sara (NJ) was asked about her friends from high school who were also undocumented and with whom she researched scholarship opportunities. She explained that out of eight undocumented students that she knew in high school, she was the only one who was able to go to college. Most of the others immediately joined the labor market, but others chose to leave the United States altogether: "Because of DACA, some of them are able to actually get jobs now, so they are working at places like Wendy's. I know two of them actually returned to their home country, Colombia, because they did not see any other opportunities here." Thus the inability to gain access to college or to higher paying jobs often leads people around the respondents to move back. For example, Laura (NJ) described her family's fluid relationship with the United States. In their case, the lack of access to college was a key factor in the decision to move back to Ecuador: "A lot of my cousins have lived here, and a lot of my cousins still do. Some of them went back there because they didn't have opportunities after they graduated high school. They just said, I'll just go back to Ecuador and study there." The same blockages affected Cristina (NJ) and her family. She explained that she spent most of her high school and college years thinking that she would eventually have to go back to Mexico because she would not be able to do anything with her degree in the United States: "I tried to think that the outcome would not affect me, because I had made up my mind that whatever happened, I would just leave to Mexico.[...] I knew I was eventually going to graduate from college and I was not going to be able to do

anything with it.” In her case, the possibility of a return to Mexico was rendered all the more possible that her older brother was deported when she was just starting college. She explained that he tried to come back to the United States, but could not find a job, and eventually moved back to Mexico on his own. Thus the lack of access to college and later to the job market is associated with the possibility of a return to one’s country of origin.

In New York, the issue of access to college was presented in financial terms, since undocumented youths still have to pay in-state tuition without the possibility of qualifying for state financial aid. In these cases, the experiences of undocumented youths led to their alienation from the university system and from government in some cases. Lucia (NY) for example explained that the college application process was difficult for her and for her friends who were also undocumented, and that each opportunity to apply for a scholarship brought with it the likelihood of being disappointed: “[My friends and I] applied for that, and we got accepted, but then we were like, ‘how are we going to get the money?’ Sometimes they got disappointed, and they moved back to my country to study at the university there.”

In other cases, it was the policies adopted by other states that led to a certain form of alienation. Alejandro (NY) was the only respondent in the sample who had clear plans for moving back to Mexico, his country of origin, after he had finished college. When talking about how immigrants are perceived in the United States, he mentioned the decision by the Tucson Unified School District to ban certain books and to eliminate Mexican American programs that were considered “anti-American” (Tobar, 2013): “How is that democratic? [...] See, that’s why I don’t trust this government. They say one thing then they do something else. That’s why I can’t trust government, that’s why I want to go back to my country.” Public policies that affect educational opportunities can therefore be related to undocumented youths’ alienation from the United States and their desire to move away. In Alejandro’s case along with

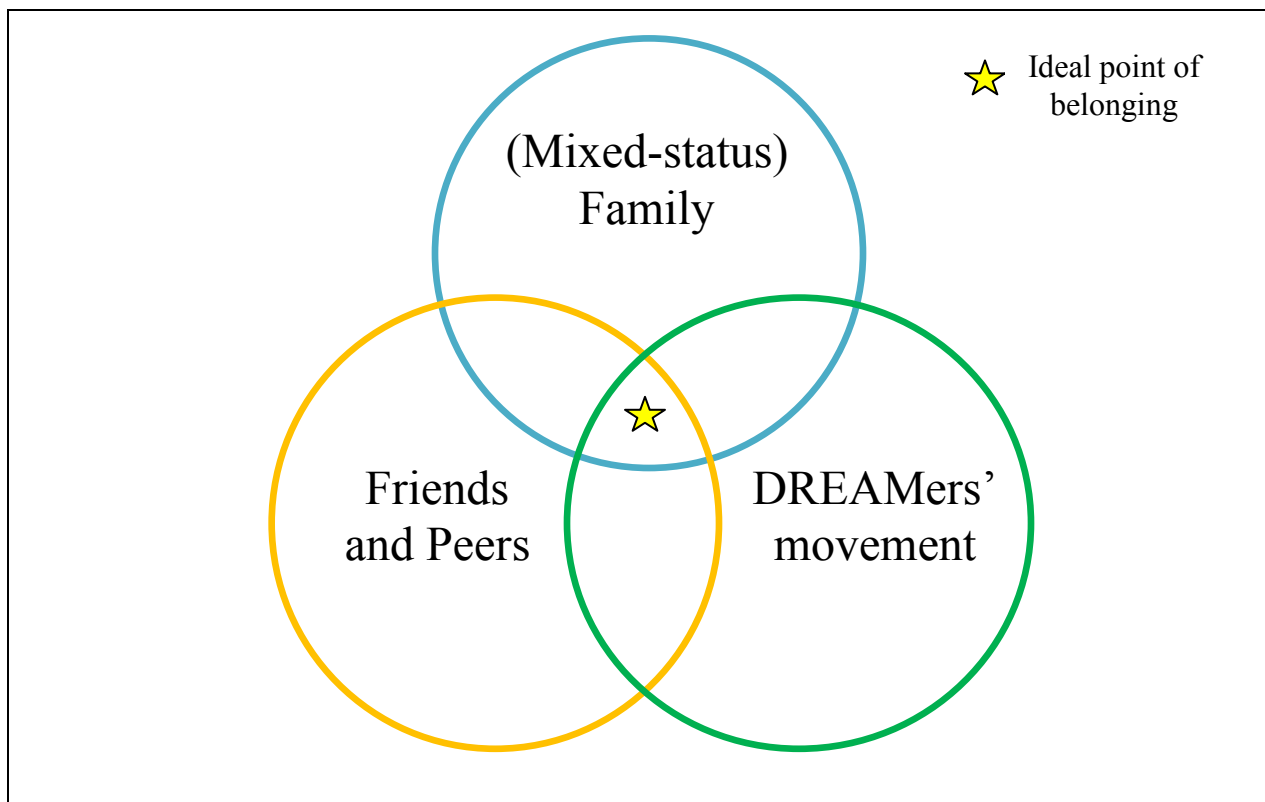
a couple other respondents, moving back was about giving back to one's country of origin, and making the most of the educational opportunities received in the United States. Ivan (NJ) moved to the U.S. when he was 14, and considers that he should use the knowledge and skills that he has acquired to benefit his country of origin, even though he does not intend to move back permanently: "there are many great things going on in Ecuador, so I would definitely like to do something over there. [...] it would be nice to establish something with the knowledge here and the resources over there. [...] As I have grown, I have seen the value in staying connected with my roots. I realized how disconnected I had gotten, so I [want to] try to go back and learn more, and see if in the future something can be done over there as well." Therefore state public policies which affect access to higher education are not the only source of potential alienation for undocumented youths. Other factors come into play, such as federal policies and policies in other states, but also one's level of connection and sense of responsibility toward their country of origin.

### **The "others": belonging at the group level**

When discussing issues of belonging for undocumented youths, it is essential to bring up group-based feelings of belonging and alienation. As has been noted in the literature, undocumented youths are uniquely positioned in the United States because they were born outside of the country and therefore technically belong to the first generation of immigrants, but because they have been educated in U.S. schools and universities, they have developed habits and aspirations that make them much closer to the second generation of their U.S.-born peers and siblings. It is necessary then to understand which groups these youths identify with, and why. In the context of political mobilization around comprehensive immigration reform and state-level "DREAM acts", undocumented youths are presented with several choices in

terms of joining a group and making collective claims on public goods. Figure 2 below displays the three possible circles of belonging which are traditionally considered “safe” spaces for undocumented youths: the family, friends and peers, and the undocumented students’ movement. The ideal point of belonging, shown with a star, indicates the possibility for one to feel comfortable in all three spaces. However, other locations on the display are possible, and are due to the fact that certain characteristics may lead undocumented youths to feel alienated from these “safe” spaces. Each of these circles has within itself the possibility for conflict among undocumented youths and the members of the circle. This section discusses the challenges faced by undocumented youths for belonging at the group level.

**Figure 5.2 Multiple circles of belonging for undocumented youths**



*Home disruptions: mixed-status families and U.S.-born siblings*

The first group which will be discussed exists within the families of undocumented youths themselves, and is made up of their U.S.-born siblings. Due to the immigration policies in place in the United States, anybody born in the country is automatically granted citizenship. In 2011, it was estimated that almost 9 million people lived in mixed-status families in the U.S. (families which include at least one unauthorized adult and one U.S.-born child), and that 400,000 undocumented children in these families have U.S.-born siblings (Taylor et al., 2011). As citizens, these siblings are automatically granted benefits that their undocumented siblings cannot gain access to, which becomes all the more evident in the college process and when entering the labor market. Multiple conflicts can emerge between siblings due to the unequal access to resources which their different statuses confer.

Conflicts tend to emerge first due to the responsibilities of undocumented youth toward their younger, U.S.-born siblings. Parents in mixed-status families often rely on their older children to handle childcare at home when they are at work, which prevents some undocumented youths from focusing on school and school-related activities. For example, Dario's (NY) brother was born when he was 15 years old. When he started college, his brother started pre-kindergarten, and their mother went back to work: "when he started school I had to go pick him up from school. Take care of him after school, pretty much. Pretty much my social life went downhill completely after he was born, because I had to be part of it." He is now heavily involved in his brother's PTA, but acknowledges the burden of home responsibilities that came with the birth of his younger brother. For Omar (NJ), the arrival of his sister meant that he could no longer be as involved in his school's tennis and soccer teams: "I ended up having to quit those [high school] teams, because I had to babysit, go home and take care of my



sister.” The increase in responsibilities at home may lead to a certain degree of antagonism between siblings, especially for those in high school who may have to give up on precious extra-curricular activities.

Additionally, these youths often have to educate their siblings in regards to their situation in the U.S., which places a great burden of responsibility on them. Siblings and relatives may use humor to discuss one’s undocumented status, as was the case for Alvaro in New Jersey. However discussions regarding status can take a much more negative turn when younger siblings take advantage of their brothers and sisters’ vulnerable status. Guadalupe (NY) explained that her youngest sister, who was born in the U.S., used to try to antagonize her other sister, who was born in Mexico over her lack of status: “And so my 10-year-old sister used to bring up to my 18-year-old sister that she was nothing here. It’s really sad to be that way. And I told her that in this country, I know a lot of people who don’t have papers, and they are in college, and they are in the best schools here, and they are illegal. So you don’t need papers.” Tensions around status can come from one’s own families, and from one’s very own siblings. The family is therefore not always a source of comfort and support for undocumented youth, who may be reminded everyday at the dinner table of all the opportunities they are missing out on.

Sometimes, however, the responsibility to explain one’s situation may occur between siblings who are both undocumented. As Smith (2013) has talked about, undocumented youths often experience the “junior/senior year crash”, when they find out that they are undocumented, or what being undocumented actually means, because they are looking into going to college. This “crash” can be repeated multiple times within a family, every time a sibling enters high school and has to “discover” what it means to be undocumented. At the time of her interview, Alba was under tremendous stress because she was trying to figure out how to tell her brother,

who just started high school, that he is undocumented. She knew that he would eventually have to be told, but she could not bring herself to do it: “That’s the sad part about my story, he does not know. I don’t want to tell him right now. I know he should know. I know it was right that I was told, but I want him to do his best and I feel like the moment you know, you become more conscious... I don’t know, that will crush him.” The family can therefore be a source of tension for undocumented youths, who often bear large responsibilities toward their younger siblings, whether U.S.-born or not.

Mixed-status families may also be the locus of tensions due to the great variation in educational opportunities between siblings, and the possible jealousy felt by undocumented youths toward their U.S.-born siblings. The majority of those who lived in such families expressed the perceived need to put pressure on those U.S.-born siblings to take advantage of their benefits, to work hard in school – essentially to take advantage of everything that had been inaccessible to themselves. This may lead in certain cases to further tensions between siblings, and to the resentment and alienation of the younger ones. When discussing this with Alejandra (NJ), she mentioned that she has a younger sister who is 10 years old and who was born in the U.S. She says that the family puts pressure on her to do well in school, at the risk of alienating her: “And sometimes I pressure her a lot and I look back and I think, ‘I should not do that to her.’ But at the same time I feel like it’s my responsibility to do it. I feel like I’ve been around her for so long that I want to see her succeed, even if I don’t go as far as I want to.” She later admitted that her younger sister has recently been suffering from migraines, and that she feels partially responsible for adding pressure in her everyday life.

Tensions can also arise within families regarding employment opportunities. Rosario (NY) brought up the fights that took place for a long time between her U.S.-born sister and herself, due to the great differences in work opportunities: “She works at the Gap. I worked at the

factory. [...] And it would piss me off. You know, it would piss me off that she had the ability to get any job she wanted, and I couldn't. Like, I had to work ten times as hard, just to you know, do normal things, just to get a pair of jeans or something." Until she was able to qualify for D.A.C.A., Rosario found a job at a factory, where she mostly worked with older, immigrant women who only spoke Spanish. She also explained that they had arguments over what she saw as her sister's lack of efforts toward her education: "when she finally decided to go to college, she went to [the same 2-year college as me], and she was getting her monthly financial aid checks [...] And sometimes she would be late for class, and she didn't want to get up on time, and I would get so upset, because I was like, 'You go to school for free! And you're just wasting it.' So we would get into really bad arguments." State policies directing who qualifies for state financial aid, and who does not, have effects which can be felt within families themselves.

Discussing citizenship can also be very difficult for undocumented youths, who may not, at the time they are in high school or starting college, have the patience and skills required for handling such a delicate issue. Andrea (NJ) and her U.S.-born sister got into fights about the benefits conferred by her sister's citizenship, and while Andrea managed to go on to college, her sister dropped out of high school and had her first child at 16. Now ten years later, Andrea acknowledges the pressure that the family put on her sister because of her status as a citizen: "She got a lot more pressure for it, absolutely. Because they were like, 'this is what your sister is doing, imagine what you can do since you are a citizen!' I know that I talked to her about it a couple of times [...] when she was in middle school and I was in high school." She now realizes the stress that she put her under at the time, and the consequences that it might have had on her sister's approach to school and college: "I started to talk to her about how 'you have this privilege that I don't have, and you need to maximize on it.' And I think that it kind of

pushed her away from me, and it kind of pushed her away from school even more.” Therefore federal policies regarding financial aid, and state policies regarding access to in-state tuition and state aid, all combine to foster conflict within mixed-status families because they create a divide between siblings around the educational, work, and travel opportunities available to them.

### *Peer identification/comparison*

Another group with whom undocumented youths could identify, but from whom they may be alienated due to state and federal policies, are their peers in high school and college. With this group respondents were much more likely to express feelings of frustration due to the lack of equal access to various opportunities compared to when they were talking about their U.S.-born siblings. Respondents made frequent comparisons between their own experiences and those of students attending the same school or the same college in order to illustrate some benefit that had been denied to them because of status.

First, it must be stated that lack of group identification can occur among immigrant groups, and that some individuals can feel cast out of their groups because of their high level of assimilation into the mainstream. Dario (NY) for example says that the U.S. is his home but that he sometimes gets the impression that he does not belong with any groups in New York City. His comments reflected both the prejudice that immigrants may face in the U.S. and the pressure of the immigrant community to maintain a certain degree of distinctiveness from the American mainstream: “You hear for example with me they’ll say “I’m too white to go back to Mexico” I’m really, it’s not the correct word I suppose, [...] sometimes I’m not accepted within my own community sometimes, because I’m not Mexican enough. [...] I don’t know, but it’s like, what do you expect me to be? Do you expect me to have a sombrero? Do you expect me

to have an accent? Have your accent? I don't understand. [...] Like you know [...] for my family and friends I've always just been me, but for anyone else's, like, I didn't know I had to serve, I didn't know I had to BE *Mexican Mexican*" (emphasis added). In Dario's case, it was difficult to belong anywhere due to the pressure exercised by each group to conform with a certain ideal of what the group looked like or how it acted. Additionally, respondents in New York tended to use comparisons with their peers in order to illustrate their struggle in college, and most notably the fact that they had to pay for college, worked, and therefore attended college part-time. Cecilia (NY) described her disappointment in students around her who did not take advantage of all the benefits they were entitled to when she herself was struggling to attend college: "I see a lot of people, especially in college, who lied for their taxes. And it bothers me that, in a way, it bothers me that they get full financial aid, meanwhile others that actually need it... And instead they just spend it on things they don't need."

In New Jersey, respondents brought up experiences from high school that described their inability to travel, or comparisons with friends who had gone away to college when they themselves struggled to attend a local community college. In New Jersey, respondents were much less likely than in New York to attend the same college or university as their friends from high school did. The switch from secondary to higher education therefore often meant the loss of friendships started in high school, and therefore of a potential support system during the transition to higher education. For example, Ernesto (NJ) explained that he found out about his undocumented status because he was unable to go on a school trip to Florida with the rest of his peers in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. His parents were worried that he did not have the proper documentation to get on the plane, even though he had his passport from Costa Rica. All of his friends from high school applied to go to college. Later as he attended a community college, his friends were attending 4-year colleges, sometimes out of state: "I know somebody who went to Princeton. I

have another friend that went to Yale. One of my other friends went to Rutgers, and I do know someone who went to Harvard too.”

For undocumented youth who are barred from even in-state tuition, maintaining ties with friends can be very difficult during the transition to college. This is due to the fact that friends may attend college in another part of the state, or in another state altogether. But it is also due to the fact that resentment can occur when hearing about the college experience of high school peers when one was denied a similar prospect due to their status. This is how Alejandra (NJ) explained the fact that she is no longer close with her friends from high school: “I find it unfair that you don’t get that experience that you hear your friends getting. You hear them coming back from college and they talk about this and that. [...] But in the back of my head, I’m like, ‘I could’ve gotten that opportunity but just because I’m undocumented, I don’t get it.’ It’s frustrating.” This type of reaction shows the damaging effect of policies regarding access to college on undocumented youths’ experience of transitioning to college, but also on their ability to create and maintain a strong network of support in the years following the “junior/senior year crash” (Smith, 2013).

### *Immigration reform and DREAMers*

A final group who could represent a resource for undocumented youth is made up of the activists of the DREAM Act movement, known as “Dreamers”, who may be undocumented themselves. Yet there was a difference in levels of identification with this group among the sample, especially between those who were active in the movement and those who were not. The latter group will be discussed in the following section.

For those who were either active in the movement, or had been peripherally involved with an event put on by activists, there was a higher chance of a full identification with members of

the movement due to the similarity in experiences in the United States. In both New York and New Jersey, respondents brought up their own experiences of rejection with the stories they heard while attending an event or a rally. This identification with the activists led them to have a more positive outlook on the movement altogether. For example Jorge (NJ), who is not involved in the Dreamers' movement, says that he has heard about activists on the news: "Even though I don't fight for it, I know... Obviously, I know what it is to be in their shoes, because I walk in them." He also mentioned the potential danger of being an activist, mainly the threat of getting arrested and deported, and expressed admiration for the activists who are not deterred by such possibilities. He added: "they are putting their lives on the line for somebody to have something. I mean, even though I don't know them, these guys have already done so much for them, for me, so I'm like, wow." The movement has relied heavily on story-sharing, for multiple reasons. One of these reasons is that telling one's story helps humanize the debate around immigration and access to college, and may help raise awareness among the public. The other reason is that it also helps with the recruitment of new members for the movement, as people who may be hesitant to become active realize that there may be less differences between them and the "Dreamers" than they think. Graciela (NJ), who has been active since high school, explains that what matters "when you hear the story of a dreamer, and not only about school, because not everybody wants to go to college, [is] the ability to feel yourself in another person. I think that we all share that. We have all had that conflicts within ourselves at some point, and you see it in all of them."

Most activists rely on coming-out events and story-sharing during meetings in order to reach out to those who are not yet involved in the movement. During the first event held by the Essex County Dream Team in Newark, NJ, three students shared their stories, explaining their family's situation and how they had transitioned to college. Ernesto, who was attending a

meeting for the first time, referred to these stories several times during his interview: “Do you remember the story of that girl, the last person who talked, who gave her story? [...] She said what happened to her when she was in high school, and she was eventually able to go to college. As you get older, as you progress, you start to become more aware of how it is affecting you, of what it means. In high school, it did not really affect me out all. I did not need to go anywhere.” In his discourse the story of the activist and his own story are fluidly related, as he switches from “she” to “you” to “I”, therefore progressively identifying with the story that was told.

When respondents identified with the “Dreamers”, the identification was most of the time based on the idea that the group was generally “deserving” of the government’s attention and goods, but were denied these goods unfairly. Within the movement, and especially during story-telling, undocumented youth are presented as hard workers, straight-A students, and as supportive of their families. Another way in which they are portrayed as deserving is because, as is often heard in policy debates, these youths did not decide to move to the United States, but their parents did. Many respondents related to this fact when describing young undocumented students and comprehensive immigration reform. For Sara (NJ), undocumented youth should have the priority when the government changes immigration law: “I would give students priority if they have to do it that way. You know, if they have to have these long restrictions because, like everyone else has said, these children did not really make the decision to be in the positions that there are in today.” The same view was shared widely, and was similarly expressed by Dario in New York: “I’m hoping, if things go the way they’re saying, [...] at least the students [...] who they said through no-fault of their own were here, were brought here, at least they would have permanent residence.” Therefore there is a clear separation established within the undocumented population between parents and the youth, the latter being more



widely considered worthy of the government's benevolence. This type of representation could make identification with "Dreamers" an attractive option for undocumented youths.

Another reason that undocumented youth are often considered more deserving is that they are portrayed as being in the process of getting an education, and trying to improve their lives. This appears crucial for respondents in fostering a better image of immigrants in general and pushing immigration reform forward. Roman (NY), who is not involved in the movement, raising awareness about the educational struggles of undocumented youths "would definitely help a lot. It makes people see you as you, and as you feel, and whatever you are studying, instead of seeing you as your status. Because they see how smart you are, or what are your capabilities, what you can do, instead of actually seeing your status." This corresponds to the idea that telling one's story helps give a face to the debate on immigration reform, and on access to in-state tuition and financial aid at the state level. Omar, an activist from New Jersey, described a rally that was organized in New Jersey to advocate for in-state tuition: "We were having a little rally there. We had about 60 or 70 students, youths or other people. Some of them were in their caps and gowns. We went in there with signs and everything, we marched around with the megaphone." The activists in the movement are making full use of the positive perception of students compared to older immigrants, who may not be perceived as being fully assimilated in the United States. As Graciela, a fellow member of the movement in New Jersey, explained, undocumented students "have become kind of the sweethearts of the immigration movement. [...] And I think that the fact that we want to go to school... It's just a whole American dream thing, the whole school thing. It resonated with the public more." The movement is using images and aspirations that resonate with popular culture in the United States, and with the firmly entrenched view that one can improve their situation by working hard and pushing themselves. For undocumented youth, identifying with the "Dreamers" can

therefore help them be associated with a group who is not perceived in as negative a manner as other immigrants may be.

However this type of description of undocumented youth through the discourse of the “Dreamers” may also have detrimental effects on those who are not involved in the movement. As Laura (NJ) explained, the insistence on portraying “Dreamers” as deserving of immigration reform in comparison with other groups may be ultimately detrimental to the movement, and especially to its outreach efforts. As she was preparing for an event at her former high school, she shared her thoughts: “I am trying to find a way to frame that in my discussion today, because the way ESL students would be looked at would be that they have not assimilated yet, they don’t speak the language, in their transition to not doing well in school, so sometimes people don’t even identify as Dreamers. So what about them? How can we add them into the discussion? We can’t have those requirements.” The problem for undocumented youth is that even within the Dreamers’ movement, or at least the movement as it has been engaged in advocacy activities over the past few years, there is the possibility that one will not fit in and will not be able to belong. Policies which create high educational and moral expectations on the part of their recipients may divide the group they seek to help even further, between those who qualify and those who do not. The issues of the narrative around the Dream Act movement, the role of public policies in fostering this narrative, and of the various strategies adopted by activists, will be treated in a later chapter on the experience of undocumented youths with federal policies.

### *Staying out of the movement*

For those undocumented youths who are not activists, and have no intention of joining the Dreamers’ movement, there tends to be a lack of identification with the Dreamers. There are

several reasons for not identifying with them, the first of which being that the individual perceives that he or she has the possibility to adjust their status in the future. In this sense, Dreamers are portrayed as the more “desperate” undocumented youth, who have no other option but to mobilize politically. Laura, who has been active in New Jersey, talked about her cousins who moved to the United States more recently than she did. They are also undocumented but have no intention of joining the movement: “they have not been through the system long enough to feel this connection. And I think they also have it in their minds that my uncle is going to petition them, so they already know that regardless, they’re going to be fine.” This shows that on the one hand, the lack of negative experiences prevents them from identifying with the stories commonly heard in rallies and meetings, but also that on the other, there is a sense of urgency that seems to be necessary in order to join the movement. Laura herself admits that she became active because she wanted to do something about her situation. Her cousins, however, do not feel this need because they have a plan to change their status without the need to get involved in any political activity. Thus if other possibilities for status adjustment are available, respondents may feel less of a need to join the movement.

This approach was shared by New York respondents as well. When asked if she would consider joining a Dream Team at her college, Ana explained that she would only do so if she did not have any plans for changing her status other than having the Dream Act pass: “The fact that I have my own petition moving, I would stay out of it. But if I was... If I didn’t have the petition and I did not have a sponsor, I would want to get involved because I would want the Dream Act to pass so I could take advantage of that.” Ana was also prevented from participating in event due to the great distance between her home and her college, and the need for her to work to pay for her education. However her perspective on joining a group was shared by Dora in New York, when she was asked about why she did not identify with

“Dreamers”. In her case, the distance from the movement was expressed in much stronger terms: “I don’t belong in that category”. She explained there is a difference between her and “Dreamers” because the members of the movement see the U.S. as their home, whereas she knows that she has more options: “they will see America as their home, in the sense that [they] came really way younger than me, probably five or eight. They probably don’t remember their countries, while I remember my country, you know. So it’s probably a sadder situation for them, because it’s like, ‘here’s the country that I see as my own, and I can’t get any benefit out of it.’ For me, it’s like, ‘it feels like home, but I know where my home is, it’s not here.’ So it’s different, it’s different. Because for them, it’s the only home they know. Me, I know somewhere else.” Dora did not have any sponsored petition moving forward, but her mother had mentioned to her several times the possibility of getting married and adjusting her status. She therefore did not feel the need to benefit from the Dream Act, since she could make other plans. Dora did not have enough knowledge about the movement to know that Dreamers are pursuing policies which would also benefit her, and she was unable to identify with the members of the movement. She clearly established a difference between herself and “the desperate ones” in the movement.

Another reason to stay away which was brought up in interviews and observed during rallies and meetings was the possible lack of identification with the main ethnic group currently represented by the movement. Even though due to the design of the project all of the interviewees were born in Latin America, events organized by various groups brought in youths who were from other parts of the world, like the Caribbean or Southeast Asia. During a rally in Albany, NY, in March 2013, several elected officials from the New York State Assembly like Francisco Moya or Gustavo Rivera stepped up to voice their support for the New York Dream Act. All of them were Latino, and expressed their support by saying “Si se puede!” Some

Haitian youths who had made the trip chuckled at first when hearing Spanish, and then started getting annoyed that only one specific group was addressed by the elected officials. They ultimately responded by yelling “In English!” whenever a speaker addressed the crowd in Spanish, and rolled their eyes to each other when they were not heard. This type of behavior on the part of organizers and supporters creates a divide among the movement which can ultimately affect recruitment and outreach.

Similar issues were brought up by activists when talking about reaching out to youths who were not Latino, when most of the leaders in the movement are from that group. Claudia, who co-founded one of the main organizations in New Jersey, explained that other groups may not be as open to disclosing their status as Latinos may be: “We’ve been able to reach out to them. They’ve come to meetings. But to actually do events with us, that’s been a little hard, and it’s only recently, with tuition equity, that we have been able to reach out to Anakbayan in Jersey City, and we have the Filipinos.” In building networks, personal relations have been necessary, especially due to the fact that in New Jersey many groups have been organized around ethnic lines, like the Filipino group Anakbayan in Jersey City, or the Hispanic group Choforitos United in Union City. Having a diverse leadership becomes crucial in recruiting outside of the “traditional”, media-related picture of undocumented immigrants. Patricia, an activist from New York, admitted facing the same problem when reaching out to other communities: “that’s something that we’ve been struggling with. To be honest, it’s something that we’ve become aware of, the fact that the majority of the people are from Latin America or speak Spanish.” She explained the delicate work of activists in recruiting from groups whose norms and values they may not be familiar with. For her, it was essential to have members of the community take on the charge of recruiting more members, and spreading the words there about the activities around the Dream Act movement. However even these activists admitted that the current

leadership of most movements could act as a deterrent from undocumented youths from Asian, Caribbean, or African background who would find it hard to identify with a majority Hispanic Dreamers' movement.

Finally, a few respondents expressed a negative view towards the actions undertaken by the movement, either because they did not believe that they would succeed, or because these were not considered effective ways of portraying immigrants as “worthy” of the attention of the government. Alejandro (NY), who wants to move back to Mexico, displayed a strong lack of political efficacy, and shared his feelings that things would not get better for him in the United States, whereas those involved in the movement still operated under the assumption that they would. He explained that “Dreamers” were active “maybe because they want to stay here. And I want to go back. And I would rather see Mexico change for the better instead of America changing for the better. Because it’s not really going to happen. It’s going to change for the better of them, but not for us.” In his view, efforts to support policy change were futile. Since he did not view his future in the United States, he did not see the need to join the movement. The distance that he expressed toward the “Dreamers” was common for those who regarded the movement in a more negative way. Guadalupe (NY), who is married and has a son born in the United States, had no intention of joining marches and demonstrations. She thought that working hard and proving yourself through your educational successes was a much more efficient way of making claims on the government, as opposed to events and demonstrations: “I don’t really see that it’s a really nice way to do it. Like for something like in Union Square, [the coming out events], [...] for me it’s not a nice thing to do because I know that most of the people that go, it’s not just because they really think that it’s going to do something, or because they really want an organization. They really just go to have fun and to play around, to make friends, just to chat and socialize and everything. [...] But if you really want to do something,

go to school and study.” From her perspective, “Dreamers” were youth who had time to have fun and socialize, which as the mother of a four-year old, she did not identify with. Therefore the focus on students and on Latinos, which is related to choices made by activists and by the media over the years, may deter undocumented youths from identifying with the members of the movement, and therefore of finding a group where they belong.

## **Conclusion**

Home is a complicated concept for undocumented youths, especially when variations in state policies affect their degree of participation in public institutions like colleges and universities. For undocumented youths, the definition of “home” oscillated between an understanding of the United States as “home” and one in which “home” remained one’s country of origin. Overall, greater access to college seems to be associated with a greater desire to make long-term plans in one’s state of residence. In addition, undocumented youths constantly have to negotiate multiple circles of belonging at the group level, including their families, their group of peers and friends, but also the undocumented students’ movement. Even if all of these circles are usually described as “safe” spaces for undocumented youths, certain characteristics are likely to make them feel alienated and therefore reduce the number of spaces and places where they can feel like they truly belong. In the case of the Dreamers’ movement, respondents’ lack of identification led to an absence of political participation on issues relative to immigration or tuition equity. It is therefore necessary to investigate the levels of civic engagement and political participation, and the compensatory role of public policies in providing resources and fostering an environment where engagement occurs.

## **Chapter 6: Immigrant youth and civic/political participation**

The goal of this research project is to compare a comprehensive measure of belonging among Latino immigrant youths living in the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey. This measure includes not only an evaluation of traditional markers of assimilation and belonging, but also a documentation of civic and political engagement among immigrant youths. This is due to the fact that civic and political activities reflect a high level of investment on the part of Latino immigrant youth in their host country, and thus help illustrate a strong sense of belonging. The assumption behind the project was that different policies relative to access to in-state tuition would lead to variations in levels of activity among immigrant youths, particularly among undocumented Latino immigrants.

This chapter presents the results from the survey of college-age Latino immigrants living in the metropolitan area. Descriptive statistics are presented for measures of civic and political engagement such as membership in political and non-political groups, political activities, levels of political efficacy, and community engagement. In addition, the survey also asked respondents about possible barriers to civic and political activities, such as experiences with discrimination, along with parental socio-economic status and citizenship status. Analyses of the data show that political efficacy and state of residence have significant effects on the average level of civic engagement among respondents. They also show that immigration status, state of residence, and experience with discrimination are factors in the average level of political activity for this group.



## **Mobilization among Latino immigrant youth**

In order to gage the levels of civic engagement and political participation among participants in the survey, various measures were used. These include levels of civic engagement, levels of political activity, levels of community engagement, and finally levels of political efficacy. This section presents results by state and by immigration status in order to investigate the existence of a relationship between state policies, status, and belonging.

### *Civic engagement*

Civic engagement was measured first by using a scale based on membership in various organizations. Table 6.1 and 6.2 show the type of organizations in which respondents become members and then their overall levels of civic engagement.

**Table 6.1 Civic engagement among Latino immigrant youths, by type of organization**

<b>Membership in...</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Political group</b>	303	0	1	.05
<b>Union</b>	303	0	1	.01
<b>Work organization</b>	303	0	1	.06
<b>Non-political group</b>	300	0	1	.30

As can be seen in Table 6.1, respondents in the survey were asked about their participation in political groups, unions, work-related organizations, and non-political groups. Based on the means, it appears that civic engagement among the participants is low, the only exception being for non-political groups. These non-political groups can include local organizations, but also school-related organizations. The lowest level of membership was for unions, which is surprising considering that Latinos tend to have high rates of union membership (Milkman,

2005). This can be explained by the fact that respondents in this project were young, with an average age of 21.8, and therefore may not have enough work experience yet to be involved in a union. Beyond the overall level of civic engagement, additional measures are necessary. The goal of this project is to establish whether there are any differences in levels of belonging between Latino immigrant youths living in New York and those living in New Jersey. Table 6.2 presents levels of civic engagement by state and by immigration status.

**Table 6.2 Levels of civic engagement among Latino immigrant youths (% by state and by immigration status)**

Civic engagement level	State			Status		
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	Total
<b>None</b>	73.6	45.3	63.0	78.	55.8	62.8
<b>Low</b>	21.5	41.9	29.1	12.7	36.2	29.1
<b>Moderate</b>	4.2	12.8	7.4	7.0	8.0	7.7
<b>High</b>	0.7	0.0	0.4	1.4	0.0	0.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

The results above are based on a score of 0 through 3 depending on membership in various organizations. No membership in any organization (a score of 0) is presented as “none”, and membership in one organization is a low level of engagement. Finally, membership in two organizations represents a moderate level of engagement and membership in three or more organizations is presented as a high level of civic engagement. The table confirms earlier findings regarding the overall low levels of civic engagement among respondents, since the majority of respondents are not members in any organizations.

There are, however, some differences between states and immigration statuses. Compared to respondents in New York, those who live in New Jersey had a smaller proportion of respondents with no civic engagement at all (less than half compared to three quarters in New

York). New Jersey respondents also had high proportions of those with a low level of civic engagement (double that of New York), and with a moderate level of engagement (three times the proportion of New York respondents). Thus even though in both states respondents had overall low levels of civic engagement, New Jersey respondents seemed to be more engaged than those in New York. This finding is surprising considering that New Jersey provides a less accommodating context for immigrant youth in terms of resources available for civic engagement. Statistical analyses below investigate the effect of state of residence on overall levels of civic engagement.

The table shows that there were few differences between respondents based on their immigration status. The same proportion had moderate and high levels of engagement whether they were documented or undocumented, and the overall level of engagement remained low. However, documented respondents were more heavily concentrated among those with no civic engagement (over three quarters) compared to those who were undocumented (a little over half). In addition, the proportion of undocumented respondents with low levels of civic engagement was three times higher than the proportion for documented respondents. Once again, based on the literature we would expect to find that undocumented respondents have lower levels of civic engagement than documented respondents, since they tend to have fewer resources available to them. Statistical analyses below investigate the strength of the effect of immigration status on civic engagement.

### *Political activities*

In addition to measuring levels of civic engagement, the survey was used to establish an understanding of the political activities of Latino immigrant youths. These activities were evaluated using a scale based on the various political acts performed by respondents over the

last twelve months. Table 6.3 presents the different types of activities included in the survey, along with the mean level of activity, while Table 6.4 presents the data for political activity aggregated by state and by immigration status.

**Table 6.3 Political activity among Latino immigration youth, by type of political action**

<b>Political action</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Persuade others to vote</b>	298	0	1	.58
<b>Display a campaign sign</b>	295	0	1	.25
<b>Contact a public official</b>	296	0	1	.25
<b>Contact the media</b>	294	0	1	.19
<b>Participate in protest, march</b>	300	0	1	.32
<b>Sign a petition</b>	296	0	1	.56
<b>Canvass</b>	299	0	1	.07

As can be seen in Table 6.3, levels of political activities are generally higher than levels of civic engagement. This can be explained by the fact that civic engagement was primarily measured based on membership in a group, which requires a higher level of commitment than the one-time activities which were used to measure political activities.

Nevertheless, besides persuading others to vote and signing a petition, overall levels are low and most activities were only performed by less than a third of respondents. On the one hand, the highest means in the table are found for activities like persuading others to vote and signing a petition, which was understood as either paper or online. On the other hand, the lowest scores are for contacting the media and canvassing. Not surprisingly, those activities with the highest scores are the ones that do not require a large amount of time on the part of respondents, since persuading others to vote can be done while spending time with friends or family, and invitations to sign a petition can be sent through social media and email. However,

those activities with the lowest scores are activities that do require time, dedication, and a higher level of skills (Brady, Verba and Schlozman, 1995).

Contacting the media requires respondents to have a pre-existing interest in a political issue, to use the media as a source of information, and to spend time writing to journalists or presenters. This form of political activity, along with canvassing, also supposes recruitment by others such as political groups, interest groups, or political parties. The variation in types of political activities can thus be explained by the unequal distribution of skills and modes of recruitment among respondents.

**Table 6.4 Levels of political activity among Latino immigrant youths (% by state and by immigration status)**

Level of political activity	State			Status		
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	Total
<b>None</b>	22.1	16.0	19.9	30.4	14.8	19.6
<b>Low</b>	27.9	11.1	21.7	26.1	19.4	21.4
<b>Moderate</b>	38.6	49.4	42.5	39.1	44.5	42.9
<b>High</b>	11.4	23.5	15.8	4.3	21.3	16.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

Table 6.4 above presents levels of political activity by state of residence and by immigration status. The results are based on a scale for political engagement ranging from 0 (no political engagement over the past year) to 7 (all types of political activities were performed over the past year). The intermediary results were classified between low levels of participation (one action over the past twelve months), moderate levels (between 2 and 4 actions performed), and high levels (five actions or more were performed). Overall, political activities seem to be better distributed among respondents than was civic engagement. Almost two thirds of respondents had either low or moderate levels of political activities, meaning that

they had performed at least one type of political activity over the past year, but no more than four.

An important finding from this table comes from looking at differences between states. The results show that respondents in New Jersey tended to be concentrated in larger proportions among those who had moderate or high levels of political activities, whereas respondents in New York were more concentrated among those who had low or moderate levels of political activities. This correlates with the findings on civic engagement, where New Jersey respondents had higher levels of civic engagement. This is in spite of the fact that New Jersey respondents live in a state which – at the time – did not provide greater access to college through a state statute, and is therefore considered to be a more restrictive context of reception. Later in this chapter, statistical analyses are conducted to measure the effect of state of residence on overall levels of political participation.

In terms of differences between immigration statuses, both groups had their highest proportion among those with moderate levels of political activity, representing about 40 percent of each group. However, the proportion of respondents with high levels of activity was about five times higher for undocumented respondents than for documented respondents. Half of the latter was also made of those with no or low levels of political activity. Undocumented status therefore appears to be related with higher levels of political activity among respondents to the survey. It is possible to assume that the limited opportunities due to an undocumented status along with the introduction of accommodating policies regarding access to college can spur involvement. Based on status inconsistency theory (McAdam, 1982), status inconsistency can lead to cognitive dissonance between a person's experience in society on a variety of status dimensions. Being undocumented can have a straining effect on some Latino immigrant youths, and encourage them to become involved in order to reduce discrepancy between the

expectations they are given in the K-12 system and their educational outcomes. For further statistical analyses, state of residence and immigration status will have to be included as possible factors affecting the average level of political activity among Latino immigrant youth.

### *Community-level engagement*

In order to distinguish different types of engagement among Latino immigrant youth, the survey asked about community-level engagement, such as church activities or membership in a neighborhood organization. This measure builds on the evaluation of the ties that respondents maintain with their community, which was mentioned in earlier chapters. Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 present various types of activities related to community engagement, along with differences between respondents by state and immigration status.

**Table 6.5 Community engagement among Latino immigrant youths, by type of activity**

<b>Type of activity</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Membership in neighborhood/community organization</b>	303	.23
<b>Religious service attendance</b>	300	.49
<b>Public meetings attendance</b>	301	.34
<b>Tutoring</b>	295	.50

From the table above we can see that compared with levels of civic engagement and political activities, participants in the study tend to be better distributed across types of community-level activities. Community-level engagement also benefits from an overall higher level of engagement than civic engagement or political activities. These two types of engagement had overall means of 0.11 and 0.32, respectively, whereas community level engagement has an overall mean of 0.39. As the literature has shown, community level engagement is often a gateway for immigrants to become progressively engaged in politics

(DeGraauw, 2008; DeSipio, 2006; Hamlin, 2008; Jones-Correa, 1998), so a higher level of activities like these is consistent with prior knowledge about immigrant political incorporation.

The types of activities with the highest involvement from respondents are tutoring and religious service attendance, while the activity with the lowest level of participation is membership in a neighborhood or community organization<sup>4</sup>. The former are not surprising considering that a majority of respondents in the sample is or has been enrolled in college, and that religious service attendance are often family-level activities, as confirmed by later interviews. However, membership in a community or neighborhood organization suggests a higher level of personal involvement, and active recruitment by these organizations. These constitute barriers to a greater level of involvement for this type of activity. Beyond overall levels of community engagement, it is necessary to understand the differences across states and immigration status, which are presented in Table 6.6.

**Table 6.6 Community engagement levels among Latino immigrant youths (% by state and immigration status)**

Level of community engagement	State			Status		
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	Total
None	17.5	8.8	14.3	17.1	12.8	14.2
Low	40.6	22.5	34.1	48.6	26.9	33.6
Moderate	23.1	36.2	27.8	25.7	29.5	28.3
High	18.9	21.2	19.7	8.6	24.4	19.5
Very high	0.0	11.2	4.0	0.0	6.4	4.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

The overall level of community engagement among respondents tends to be concentrated on the lower end, with three quarters of immigrant youth having a low or moderate level of

<sup>4</sup> Membership in non-political groups in Table 6.1 was distinct in the survey from membership in neighborhood/community organization presented in Table 6.5.



community engagement, or none at all. There are, however, some differences between respondents depending on their state of residence and their immigration status. When looking at the differences between states, it appears that respondents in New Jersey tend to be more engaged in their community than respondents in New York. In the latter state, the majority of respondents (about 58 percent) is concentrated among the two lowest categories, and no participant from that state had a very high level of engagement. On the other hand, respondents from New Jersey were more concentrated among the moderate and high categories of engagement (about 57 percent), and over 10 percent of the group had a very high level of community-level engagement. This finding is consistent with earlier findings about civic engagement and levels of political activity, for which respondents in New Jersey also had higher levels of participation. As mentioned in the discussion on previous research, community engagement is often a gateway toward political participation among immigrants.

In terms of differences across immigration statuses, there also seems to be a difference in the sense that undocumented respondents appear to have higher levels of community engagement than documented respondents. On the one hand, two thirds of documented respondents were concentrated among those with the lowest levels of engagement, whereas less than 40 percent of undocumented respondents were in the same category. On the other, almost a third of undocumented respondents were found in the two highest levels of community engagement, against only less than 10 percent of those who were documented. Once again, state of residence and immigration status both seem to be related to the level of engagement of respondents, and will have to be further investigated with statistical analyses.

### *Political efficacy*

This project investigates the relationship between state policies and the level of belonging among Latino immigrant youth, including their civic engagement and political participation. The goal is to understand what type of resources or barriers are created by policies which increase access to college for some immigrant youths. According to the literature, one of the main factors related to political engagement is political efficacy, which is traditionally defined as the feeling that one's actions can have an impact on the political process (Craig and Maggiotto, 1982). The survey for this project was used to measure levels of political efficacy among Latino immigrant youth. Efficacy was evaluated based on two questions relative to respondents' levels of agreement with the fact that they could make a difference in their community, and that they could make things better by working with others. Considering that overall levels of participation tended to be higher in New Jersey than in New York, and among the undocumented compared to the documented, it can be expected that levels of political efficacy will follow a similar trend. Table 6.7 below presents the results by state and by immigration status, in order to investigate the possibility of differences among these categories.

**Table 6.7 Political efficacy among Latino immigrant youth (% by state and by immigration status)**

Level of political efficacy	State			Status		
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	Total
<b>Low</b>	4.2	0.0	2.6	4.3	1.8	2.6
<b>Moderate</b>	23.2	12.6	19.2	29.0	14.6	18.9
<b>High</b>	45.1	55.2	49.0	49.3	48.8	48.9
<b>Very high</b>	27.5	32.2	29.3	17.4	34.8	29.6
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

In the table above, four levels of political efficacy were created based on the respondents' results on the political efficacy score of 1 through 5. Those with a score under 2 were labeled as having "low" political efficacy. Those with a score between 2 and 3.5 were labeled as "moderate" political efficacy. Finally, those with a score between 4 and 5 were labeled as having a "high" level of political efficacy, and those with a score of 5 had a "very high" level of efficacy.

Overall, over three quarters of respondents had high or very high levels of political efficacy, and only a very small proportion had low levels of political efficacy. When comparing the two states, respondents in New York were more widely distributed across categories of efficacy, whereas respondents in New Jersey were more concentrated among the highest scores. A quarter of New York respondents had low or moderate political efficacy, against only 12 percent for those in New Jersey. This is consistent with earlier findings which showed higher levels of civic engagement and political participation among respondents from New Jersey. Political efficacy may therefore be a factor which can explain the variation in overall civic engagement and political participation, and has to be included in the statistical analyses.

When comparing respondents according to immigration status, differences already seen appear again. Whereas about a third of documented respondents made up the two categories with the lowest political efficacy scores, only about 15 percent of undocumented respondents had similar results. The proportion of undocumented respondents with very high political efficacy was also double that of documented respondents. These results also echo earlier results on civic engagement and political activities. However, what these findings do not indicate is the direction of the relationship between political efficacy and high levels of civic engagement and political participation. High levels of political efficacy could be the cause of greater participation in one's community or state, but it could also be the result of past experiences of

civic and political activities. As the interviews with undocumented youths show, once participants become active, they realize their own potential for creating and effecting change in government. It is therefore necessary to take precautions when analyzing the role of political efficacy in affecting levels of civic engagement and political participation.

Political efficacy among respondents can be affected by several factors, including their personal experiences and their education. The table below shows the results for a linear regression on political efficacy which highlights those factors which played a role on the level of political efficacy among respondents.

**Table 6.8 Determinants of political efficacy among respondents**

Variables	Model
Constant	1.61***
Discrimination	.05
Educational Attainment	.01
Self-esteem	.41***
College Experience	.18*
High School Achievement	.07
R square	.23***

*\*sig < .05; \*\*sig < .01; \*\*\*sig < .000*

The table above shows that political efficacy is largely dependent on individual-level characteristics such as self-esteem, and is somewhat dependent on the experience of respondents in college (as described previously, this measure evaluated the level of involvement in college through clubs, leadership positions, and volunteering). Participants who had a more positive experience in college were therefore more likely to have a higher sense of

political efficacy. However, characteristics such as high school achievement and educational attainment were not significant determinants of average level of political efficacy.

### **Barriers to civic and political engagement**

For Latino immigrant youths, there are many barriers to civic engagement and political participation. Some of them are related to traditional measures of assimilation, which have been discussed earlier. As the literature has shown, immigrants face several obstacles in their path toward political incorporation. These obstacles include a lack of command of English, a lack of the basic knowledge of the U.S. educational and political system, the maintenance of strong ties with their country of origin, and the age of immigrants, all of which can prevent any personal involvement in the host country (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008) The specificity of the sample was that it focused on college-age immigrants, who had for the most part spent the majority of their lives in the United States. As a result they did not face similar obstacles that other immigrants may have to deal with, such as language issues and lack of basic knowledge of the U.S. political system. However there are still some barriers to civic and political participation for this group, which include their own experience with discrimination, their parents' immigration and citizenship status, as well as their parents' socio-economic status. This section presents the results from the survey for each of these potential barriers to participation.

#### *Experience with discrimination*

The experiences with discrimination of Latino immigrant youths need to be studied as they may both deter and encourage political activity. On the one hand, discrimination from members of the majority group who are overwhelmingly represented in political institutions

can turn young Latino immigrants away from even trying to influence these institutions. This can take the form of a lack of interest in civic and political activities and of a lack of attempt to contact the media or elected officials. In this sense, higher levels of experience with discrimination would be related with lower levels of civic and political engagement. In fact, some findings in the literature on immigrant political incorporation show the existence of a relationship between immigrants' lack of trust in the United States as the number of experiences with discrimination increases (Michelson, 2003). On the other hand, as we have seen above, status inconsistency theory relies on the discrepancy between the various statuses assigned to a single individual within society. This discrepancy can be created by one's experience with discrimination, which can therefore stimulate an increase in mobilization on the part of individuals. In order to document levels of discrimination experienced by Latino immigrant youth, the survey asked about three types of possible experiences, which are presented in Table 6.8 below.

**Table 6.9 Overall experience with discrimination, by type**

<b>Type of discrimination</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Felt disrespected because of one's race/ethnicity</b>	263	2.53
<b>Felt accused or treated suspiciously because of one's race/ethnicity</b>	263	2.16
<b>Felt insulted or called a name because of one's race/ethnicity</b>	264	2.25

The table above shows that levels of discrimination experienced by respondents are rather low, since the means are included between 2.1 and 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning that the type of discrimination was never experienced, and 5 meaning that this type of discrimination was experienced at least once a week.

Most of the means are between a score of 2 and 3, which means that on average the experience had occurred at least once but no more than a few times. The type of discrimination that was the most frequently experienced on average was feeling disrespected because of one's race or ethnicity, which has a mean of 2.53, but also a median and a mode of 3. These experiences need to be put in the context of the state where they occurred and the status of the respondents, both of which could play a role in the type and frequency of discrimination. Table 6.9 below shows the results aggregated by state of residence and immigration status.

**Table 6.10 Experience with discrimination among Latino immigrant youths (% by state and by immigration status)**

Level of experience with discrimination	State			Status		
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	Total
<b>Low</b>	40.8	29.9	36.7	50.7	31.1	36.9
<b>Moderate</b>	48.6	63.1	54.1	42.0	58.5	53.6
<b>High</b>	10.6	6.9	9.2	7.2	10.4	9.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

The results in the table above are classified in low, moderate, and high levels of experiences with discrimination, based on the respondent's average score on the three types of discrimination presented in the table above. Overall, it appears that only a minority of respondents experienced high levels of discrimination – around 10 percent for each group. When looking at differences across states, variations between the two groups are not as clear as on other indicators from the survey. Even though a larger proportion of New York respondents experience only low levels of discrimination, a higher proportion of them also experience high levels of discrimination compared to respondents living in New Jersey.

Differences appear more clearly when looking at differences across immigration statuses, which indicate that undocumented respondents tend to experience higher levels of discrimination than documented respondents. Over half of those who are documented experienced low levels of discrimination, against less than a third of those who are undocumented. Additionally, a slightly higher proportion of undocumented respondents reported experiencing high levels of discrimination than among documented respondents. These findings indicate the amount of discrimination experienced by respondents, but do not show whether they affect average levels of civic engagement and political participation. This question is addressed below when looking at statistically significant factors of political participation.

#### *Parent immigration status*

One of the barriers to civic and political engagement among Latino immigrant youths is not simply their own immigration status, which may lead them to experience discrimination and be denied certain education benefits, but also the status and citizenship of their parents. This is important because of the role of the family in the political socialization process, and because many community-level activities, which serve as a gateway for political activities, are family-level activities like attending church services. Having parents who still live in one's country of origin can limit the civic and political engagement of young immigrants in the United States because it helps maintain a strong tie with their country of origin, and may direct their civic efforts toward another country. In addition, having a parent who has naturalized as a U.S. citizen can bring many benefits to Latino immigrant youths. Citizens are eligible for more benefits, but are also able to vote, and will therefore benefit from higher level of recruitment on the part of community, neighborhood, or partisan organizations. This recruitment targets



parents who are citizens but can affect the entire family dynamic and approach toward civic and political issues. On the other hand, households which are headed by non-citizens may rank lower on the list of groups to mobilize for political parties and interest groups (Ramakrishnan, 2005). It is therefore important to document the status of parents of Latino immigrant youths, as it may shed light on the opportunities for participation available to this group. Table 6.10 below shows the citizenship information relative to the parents of respondents to the survey.

**Table 6.11 Immigration and citizenship status for parents of Latino immigrant youths (% by state and immigration status of respondents)**

Parent Immigration status	State			Status		Total
	New York	New Jersey	Total	Documented	Undocumented*	
<b>Mother</b>						
Not in US	13.9	12.6	13.4	14.1	12.8	13.2
Not a citizen	59.7	75.9	65.8	47.9	74.4	66.4
Citizen	26.4	11.5	20.8	38.0	12.8	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<b>Father</b>						
Not in US	30.1	31.0	30.4	26.8	32.5	30.8
Not a citizen	49.0	58.6	52.6	42.3	57.1	52.6
Citizen	21.0	10.3	17.0	31.0	10.4	16.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100	100.0	100.0	100

\*estimated based on type of visa at arrival

As the table above shows, it appears that only a minority of the parents of the respondents has become U.S. citizens, and that a majority of them do live in the United States but remain non-citizens. This means that parents may not be able to provide their immigrant children all of the resources necessary to complete the process of political socialization, and that these youths will have to rely on outside sources for these resources. Due to sensitivity issues, the survey did not directly ask for the immigration status of respondents' parents, so the results cannot be broken down between documented and undocumented immigrant parents. However, the

proportion of parents who are U.S. citizens increases among respondents who are documented. This proportion is the highest among mothers compared to fathers, as citizens represent 38 percent of mothers for documented respondents, against only about 12 percent for undocumented respondents. Participants who were themselves undocumented had the highest proportions of parents who were living outside of the United States, or who were still non-citizens. When comparing results by state, it appears that parents in New York have been twice as likely to naturalize as parents in New Jersey. The highest proportion of naturalization occurred for the mothers of respondents in New York, and citizens represented about a quarter of mothers for respondents from this state.

The results from the table also show differences between the behavior and choices of parents themselves. It appears that fathers are much more likely to be living outside of the United States than mothers. With the exception of the fathers of documented respondents, overall about 30 percent of fathers of participants were living outside of the United States. This is particularly the case for fathers of respondents who are undocumented, who represented almost a third of all fathers for this group. Again, this means that some of the resources for political socialization are missing from the households of some of the respondents, either because their parents are not there to provide them, or because they themselves may not be able to gain access to them.

#### *Parent's socio-economic status*

In addition to citizenship and immigration status, the socio-economic status of parents can be a significant factor in immigrant youths' ability to be civically and politically engaged. Based on the majority of models found in the literature, political participation most often depends on the availability of three resources, namely knowledge, time, and money (Verba,

Schlozman and Brady, 1995). More recently, Schlozman, Verba and Brady (2012) have demonstrated the persistent stratification of political activity in the United States, where political activity increases as socio-economic status improves as well. In addition, according to the traditional, straight-line assimilation model for immigration, as immigrants spend more time in the United States they will make educational and socio-economic gains, and therefore will be more likely to become engaged politically (Lee et al., 2006). In the survey, respondents were asked to provide several pieces of information about their parents, from which a measure of parent socio-economic status was constructed. This measure was based on several variables, including the skill level of the parent's occupation, parents' comfort level with the English language, and the highest degree attained by both parents. The results were constructed on a scale from 0 to 4, and the overall mean for socio-economic status for parents in the sample was 1.95 (N = 199). The mean for New York families was 1.91, and the mean for New Jersey families was only slightly higher at 1.97. However, statistical t-tests showed that there were no significant differences across states.

The category of jobs that parents hold also affects the type and resources available for the political socialization of their children. Parents who hold jobs which demand a higher level of education may earn more and therefore provide more of the resources needed for political participation. However, parents who hold jobs that do not necessitate a lot of skills, or which do not put them in contact with people, may delay their own assimilation process in terms of economic and linguistic gains. In order to understand the type of environment in which Latino immigrant youths grow up, it is necessary to investigate the types of occupations held by their parents. Table 6.12 below presents these categories for both mothers and fathers.

**Table 6.12 Occupation categories of parents of Latino immigrant youths (% by parent)**

<b>Category of occupation</b>	<b>Mothers</b>	<b>Fathers</b>
Unemployed	23.1	14.4
Unskilled labor	31.2	30.6
Service	27.4	32.0
Clerical	11.5	12.6
Professional	6.8	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

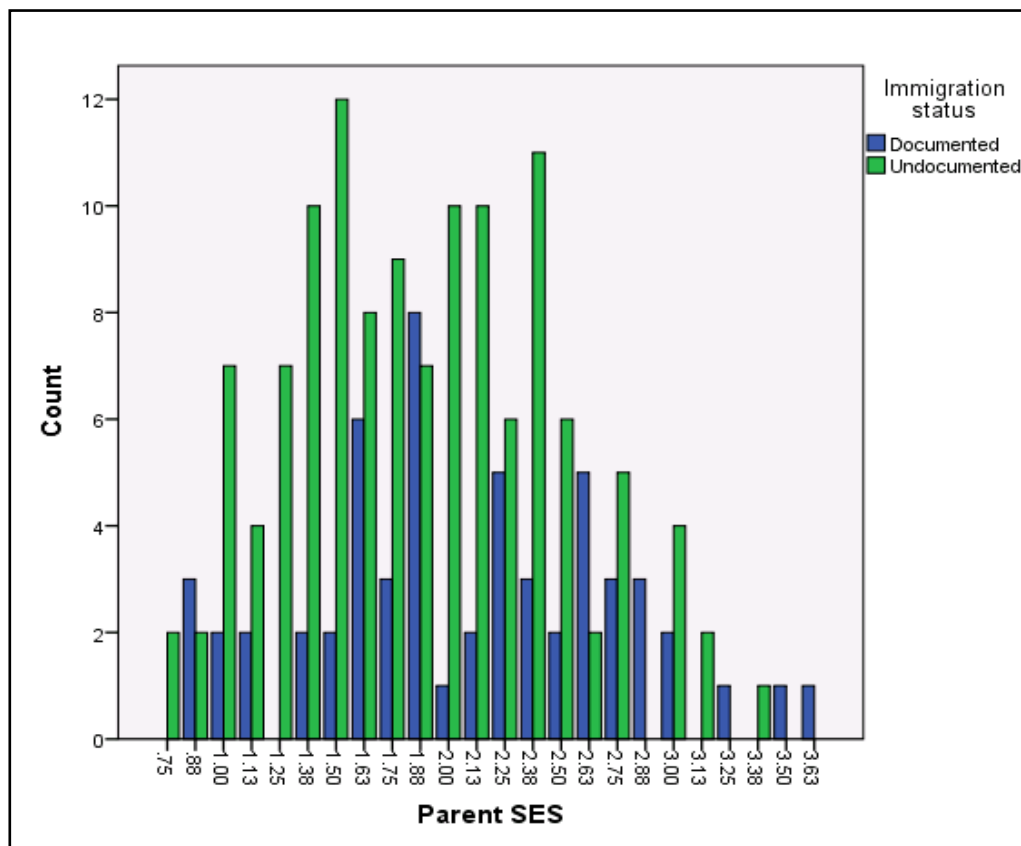
The table was constructed based on respondents' open answers on the occupation of each of their parents. The label "unskilled labor" was used for parents who worked in maintenance, child care, or were factory workers. Under "service", the jobs which were found were restaurant work, working at a beauty salon, or driving a cab. "Clerical" jobs included respondents whose parents owned a business, managed a restaurant, or were nurses. Finally "professional" occupations included teachers, lawyers, and doctors.

As the table above shows, parents of the respondents tend to be concentrated among the least skilled job categories. More than three quarters of mothers and fathers were either unemployed, or worked as unskilled labor or in the service industry. Less than 20 percent of mothers and less than a quarter of fathers had occupations in the two highest categories which require the highest levels of education and skills. The higher proportion of mothers who are unemployed compared to father is explained by the fact that housewives were classified as "unemployed" for the purpose of this project because they did not hold a job outside the home. Based on this table, it appears that the resources which parents of the respondents can provide toward political participation are very limited. The majority of parents hold occupations which are categorized as "unskilled" or in the service industry, which explains the overall low socio-economic status scores mentioned above. Most of the parents of the respondents are concentrated in low-skilled, low-paying jobs. This confirms what was mentioned earlier, which

is that the resources necessary for participants to become civically and politically involved must be obtained outside of their household, most likely in institutions like schools and universities.

Finally, it is necessary to try to understand the differences in resources available for respondents who are undocumented compared to those who are documented. Figure 1 below presents the distribution of the respondents' parents' socio-economic status.

**Figure 6.1 Distribution of parents' socio-economic status, by immigration status**



As the figure shows, it appears that the parents of respondents who are undocumented tend to be more concentrated on the lower end of the socio-economic status range. The proportion of respondents who are undocumented is larger as SES scores are lower, and the distribution of

these respondents tapers to the right. On the other hand, the distribution of documented respondents follows a more normal curve, with a higher concentration of respondents in the center of the distribution. From this figure it appears that undocumented respondents may have even fewer resources available for political participation than other participants due to the low socio-economic status of their parents. Overall, the socio-economic status of parents in the sample may constitute a barrier to their political incorporation since they do not appear to be able provide the necessary resources for participation.

### **Effects on civic engagement and political participation**

The goal of this research is to investigate the existence of a relationship between the policies of a state and the levels of belonging of the young Latino immigrants residing in that state. Sense of belonging is understood in a broad manner, which includes levels of civic engagement and political participation, as it is assumed that these activities illustrate the strength of the bond that young immigrants have created with their place of residence. Now that the results regarding civic engagement and political participation among respondents have been presented, the next step is to use these variables in order to understand what can influence variations in these respondents' levels of civic and political engagement. In addition to state of residence, immigration status, and political efficacy, these youths' connection with their country of origin can be included so as to look for a possible negative effect of transnational mobilization, as opposed to local and US-based mobilization.

#### *Factors of civic engagement*

First, the analyses will concentrate on factors related to civic engagement among Latino immigrant youths. The civic engagement score is used as the outcome variable of a simple

linear regression. The independent variables included in the analyses include levels of political efficacy, whether respondents are enrolled in college or not, their immigration status, and their state of residence. The goal is to assess the effect of political efficacy on civic engagement, but also whether attending college, being undocumented, and residing in New Jersey have an effect on civic engagement. The original assumption for the project was that enrollment in college would be have a positive effect on civic engagement, whereas being undocumented and living in a state that restricted access to college would have a negative effect on civic engagement. Table 12 below presents the results for a linear regression model including these variables.

**Table 6.13 Factors of civic engagement among Latino immigrant youth**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
(Constant)	-.589**	-.620	-.645*
Political efficacy	.237***	.228**	.232**
Enrolled in college	.115	.113	.066
Status – undocumented	.038	.039	.045
State – New Jersey	.202**	.211**	.226**
Gender - Male		-.020	
Experiences with discrimination		.061	
Parent SES			.062
R square	.141***	.148***	.150***

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\* *sig* < .05 \*\**sig* < .01 \*\*\**sig* < .000

As the table above shows, political efficacy and state of residence are significant factors of civic engagement among respondents, but immigration status and college enrollment do not have a significant effect. Political efficacy shows to be the most significant factor of civic

engagement. For each unit increase in respondents' political efficacy score, there is a 0.24 increase in their average civic engagement score.

The more surprising result from the table comes from the effect of state of residence on civic engagement. Based on the table, respondents who live in New Jersey have an average level of civic engagement that is 0.2 higher than respondents who live in New York. This means that in states where policies are less accommodating to immigrant youths, respondents become more engaged compared to those who live in states where policies tend to be more accommodating. These results go against the assumptions made in this project, but they are consistent with theories such as status inconsistency theory, which present mobilization as the result of a discrepancy among the various statuses assigned to individuals by society. In a state like New Jersey where immigrant youths, and particularly undocumented youths, are treated by public policies in an inconsistent manner depending on whether they are in the K-12 system or in higher education, the discrepancy in treatment may spur an increase in mobilization in order to seek a more balanced treatment by public policies.

Among the other results from the table, it appears that there is no significant effect from immigration status or college enrollment on civic engagement. Based on observations made during field research, additional analyses were conducting using gender, experience with discrimination, and parents' citizenship as variables, but they showed to have no significant effect on civic engagement. These results are displayed under Model 2 in the table.

Finally, an additional linear regression was conducted using control variables like parent socio-economic status, which is presented under Model 3, but there was very little change in the overall strength of the model. Based on these analyses, it seems that different types of factors play a role depending on whether one is looking at sense of belonging or civic and political engagement. When analyses relative to sense of belonging in the United States were



conducted earlier, it was individual characteristics such as age at arrival and trust in the U.S. which seemed to prevail over other, external factors. Here on the contrary, an external factor like state of residence has a significant effect, albeit the opposite of the one that was expected.

### *Factors of political activity*

The next series of analyses focuses on factors of political activity among the respondents. The outcome variable used for analyses is the score on political activity presented above. The independent variables which are used in the first model, displayed in the first column, include political efficacy, whether respondents are or have been enrolled in college, experiences with discrimination, along with state of residence and immigration status. The original hypothesis for this project was that states which provided greater access to college would be associated with higher levels of political activity, because the policies of the state would provide the resources necessary for more engagement on the part of Latino immigrant youths. However if the effect of state of residence proves to not be significant, it is necessary to include other variables which may have an effect, such as personal and social experiences like levels of political efficacy, enrollment in college, and experiences with discrimination. Table 6.13 below presents the results of statistical analyses relative to political activity among respondents.

**Table 6.14 Factors of political activity among Latino immigrant youths**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
(Constant)	-1.678*	-1.603	-1.559
Political efficacy	.211**	.222**	.230**
Enrolled in college	.085	.074	-.004
Experience with discrimination	.194**	.183**	.221**
State – New Jersey	.152*	.164*	.212**
Status – undocumented	.168*	.160*	.161*
Ties to country of origin		-.015	
Gender - Male		.019	
Parental SES			.002
R square	.196***	.203***	.233***

*\*sig < .05; \*\*sig < .01; \*\*\*sig < .000*

As the table shows, the most significant factors having an effect on political activity are political efficacy, experience with discrimination, state of residence, and status. Being enrolled in college does not seem to significantly affect the average level of political activity among respondents. Here it can be seen that it is individual characteristics like sense of political efficacy, experience with discrimination, and immigration status which have more effect than an outside characteristic like college enrollment. Political efficacy has an effect on political activity that is similar to the one it had on civic engagement. Experience with discrimination has a positive effect: for each unit-increase in experience with discrimination, the average score of political activity goes up by 0.19. This goes along with status inconsistency theory, which is based on the idea that individuals will experience a variation in status which will spur mobilization.

Additional statistical analyses were completed to try to understand whether individuals' ties with their country of origin and gender had significant effects on political activity, and are displayed in the second column (Model 2). As the model shows, neither of these variables had significant effect. Finally, an additional model was created based on a linear regression using parental socio-economic status as a control variable, which is displayed in Model 3 in the third column. Even though the overall model gained in strength, the results for the effect of each independent variable were not altered in any significant manner.

Additional results can be found in the table, which answer the original questions for this research project. The early hypothesis of this project was that undocumented youth had fewer resources for political engagement than other immigrants or other youths their age, and that therefore they relied on state policies to help them gain access to these resources, mainly in higher education. The project therefore needed to answer the question regarding the effect of immigration status and state of residence on political activity. As Table 6.13 shows, both of these variables actually have a positive effect on political activity. For participants living in New Jersey, there is a 0.15 increase in average political activity. For those who are undocumented, there is a 0.17 increase in average levels of political activity. These are results which tend to the opposite direction of the one expected in the project, but are not overall inconsistent with the literature. On the contrary, it shows that accommodating state policies do not necessarily encourage political mobilization, but that restrictive policies do. Immigration status is not in itself a barrier to political activity, even though it may limit the number of resources available to some immigrant youths.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter describes findings from a survey of Latino immigrant youths regarding their civic and political engagement, along with factors affecting the average levels of engagement among this population. Results indicate that respondents tend to have low levels of civic engagement, moderate levels of political activity, and moderate levels of community or neighborhood engagement.

This chapter also presented indicators that could be barriers to the civic and political participation of Latino immigrant youths. First, participants reported having experienced generally low levels discrimination, with little differences across states. Nevertheless, undocumented immigrants were more likely to report higher levels of discrimination than those who were documented. In addition, parental immigration status and socio-economic status were also detailed to look for factors that could delay assimilation and therefore political incorporation. Only a minority of parents of respondents have naturalized as U.S. citizens, even though the proportion is higher for respondents who were documented. This means that these parents are less likely to constitute targets for political mobilization and recruitment from outside sources such as political parties and interest groups, thus reducing the number of opportunities for engagement for the participants. In addition, parents were also concentrated among those jobs that required the least amount of skills, which led them overall, and particularly parents of undocumented respondents, to display very low levels of socio-economic status.

Overall, respondents showed high levels of political efficacy, which supports findings relative to political activity and community engagement. For all of these measures, there are some differences across states and immigration statuses. Unlike what was expected, it appears that respondents living in the state of New Jersey tend to have higher levels of engagement than

those who live in New York. Additionally, undocumented respondents also reported high levels of engagement than documented respondents.

In fact, statistical analyses show that the main factors which influence levels of civic engagement are respondents' political efficacy and their state of residence. The latter variable however was found to have the opposite effect that what was originally expected: living in a state with more restrictive policies has a positive effect on civic engagement, compared to living in a state with more accommodating policies. Additional analyses show that the main factors playing a role in political participation are in fact individuals' undocumented status, their experience with discrimination, and their residence in a state with more restrictive policies regarding access to higher education. This shows that political mobilization among respondents may not be due to the availability of resources provided by a more accommodating state. On the contrary, increased mobilization seems to be the results of the challenges met by individuals, either due to their immigration status or due to the restrictive policies adopted by their state of residence.

## **Chapter 7: State-level Public Policies and the Political Mobilization of Undocumented Youths**

The goal of this project is to assess whether state laws that open or restrict eligibility for in-state tuition for undocumented youths are associated with different levels of belonging and different styles of organizing. It relies on theories predicting that increased interaction between majority and minority groups as well as equal opportunities both promote immigrant assimilation. It also uses a resource availability model of mobilization. Results indicate that state laws affecting access to college often represent the first time that undocumented youths' personal lives and their ability to make plans for the future are impacted by public policies. These laws are also the driving element behind the mobilization among undocumented youths because they alter the nature and the amount of resources available to the group, more specifically their civic skills, time for participation, and the potential for the recruitment of allies. The results also reveal differences in the styles of organizing among undocumented youths in the two states which could explain the overall differences in political participation. The chapter underscores the importance of place and policy in undocumented youths' political mobilization.

### **First experiences with public policy**

Undocumented youths find out about the policies which target them when they are in high school, either because they learn about financial aid and in-state tuition legislation, or because they try to obtain a driver's license in their state and are unable to. Since the realization that one

is undocumented can have severe consequences on individuals' well-being and ability to make plans for the future, including pursuing higher education, we must investigate how these youths come to learn about public policies, and whether there are any differences between the states of New York and New Jersey.

### *Acquiring Knowledge about Public Policies*

Many undocumented youths learn very late about the policies which affect their access to college. This is evident in both New Jersey, which bars access to in-state tuition, and in New York, in spite of the fact that access to in-state tuition has been adopted in the law in 2002. In New Jersey, many youths find out about the limitations imposed by status because they are told by school staff that they cannot qualify for in-state tuition, because they are offered scholarships which they learn they cannot accept, or because they cannot obtain a driver's license after passing a test with the rest of their high school class. For Ernesto (NJ), the transition to community college was "difficult, because even if I [was offered] grants or scholarships, I could not get them. [...] You can imagine the frustration." He was offered a \$20,000 scholarship from his town, but had to turn it down because of his status. He was also accepted to Rutgers, New Jersey's largest public university, with funding, but had to attend community college instead because he was ineligible for financial aid.

Most undocumented youths live in low-income families who are unable to pay the rates of out-of-state tuition. Graciela (NJ), who also grew up in New Jersey, explains that even though she always knew she was undocumented, she never really understood what it meant until the time came to apply for college. She was offered a couple of internships out of state, and went to her guidance counselor to fill out the paperwork: "I told her that I did not have a social security number, [that] I am undocumented. And I did not even know that it was such a bad term to say.

Her reaction kind of said it all. And then she told me, you can't apply." For undocumented youths, there is a difference between being aware of one's status, and understanding the full consequences of this status on one's opportunities. This awareness usually comes about in high school, just as they are making plans for the future.

In New York, even though the statute allowing undocumented youths to qualify for in-state tuition dates back to 2002 (and the practice in the CUNY system is even older), access to college remains challenging. There are two main reasons for this. The first is that information is still hard to obtain about the real opportunities available to undocumented youths. The second is that paying for in-state tuition can still be a tremendous financial burden for undocumented families, most of whom have very low income. As indicated by Smith, (2013), many high school guidance counselors and college staff are not familiar with the statutes in place. Adrian (NY) went to trade school after high school to become an auto technician. When asked why he did not go to a traditional university, he explains: "I heard that it was really hard. I did not know [about] the financial aid for college. I did not know how that worked. I knew that I would not have as much help because of my Social Security. And it's expensive. I don't know exactly how expensive it might be, but I think it's pretty expensive." As it turned out, Adrian did not know until we met for the interview that he would have been eligible for in-state tuition. Instead, he worked full time for six years to be able to pay a \$15,000 tuition fee at a trade school. He did not benefit from information passed on by his high school teachers or guidance counselors about opportunities for undocumented students.

In a similar case, Roberto did manage to obtain information and help for college, but through personal connections rather than by relying on school communications. As he was about to graduate from college, one of his professors alerted him to an application deadline for a graduate program at a private university in New York City: "She pitched me on it and then



she said, ‘by the way, the application is due tomorrow, I can get you 48 hours if you need it.’ And at first I wasn’t considering it, but she went out on a limb for me and I figured the least I could do was apply.” Therefore, even for those students who have been able to navigate the system at the undergraduate level, information is still hard to come by about financial support and how to continue their education at the graduate level.

### *Differences in policy first affecting undocumented youths*

One main difference in how these young immigrants find out about their undocumented status is linked to the differences in their surrounding environment, and mainly if they live in an urban area or in a suburban area. Those living in an urban area, who make up the majority of the sample for the study, find out about their status when they start talking about college with their teachers, their guidance counselors, or their friends. Alicia (NY), who grew up in New York City, found out about the limitations of her undocumented status early in high school, because her friends were going through the college application process: “I knew that if I wanted to apply for financial aid, I was not going to be able to. Because that happened to some friends that were seniors. I knew that was going on with them.” High school students are encouraged to train for the college application process by filling out a Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, which asks for a social security number. However, those who live in a more suburban or rural area may find out about their immigration status around the same time, only because they are trying to get a driver’s license at the same time as their resident or U.S.-citizen friends. Claudia (NJ), who grew up in a suburban area of New Jersey, describes the progressive change in the meaning of “undocumented” in high school: “[My mom] had told me that word, but I did not know what it meant. So it was not until my junior year that I finally knew what that meant [...] In my sophomore year, trying to get a driver’s

license, I was still questioning what that meant. Because I could not drive. [... but ] when I talked to that guidance counselor it really seemed like that was it, that was the end of the road for me.” High schools offer drivers’ education classes and then direct students to their local Department of Motor Vehicles to get a driving permit, which requires a social security number. Both of these situations occurred in New York and New Jersey, depending on where the young immigrants were living.

The fact that many students find out late in their K-12 education about access to higher education illustrates a wide problem of communication and information regarding the policies in place in each state. This is the case whether the policies adopted are designed to help or to hinder access to college. Many high school teachers and guidance counselors are not aware of the statutes in their states, as can still be the case in New York (Smith, 2013). Guidance counselors and those who work in colleges and universities admissions office workers may give students the wrong information about their ability to register and to pay a more affordable tuition, which is likely to deter students from attending or from staying enrolled. In New Jersey, school and university office workers also need to be more educated about the information they give students regarding their ability to *attend* higher education.

Undocumented youths often end up researching schools and scholarship opportunities themselves, sometimes at the cost of their extra-curricular activities. Sara, who attended high school in New Jersey, did not receive any help from her guidance counselor. At the time when she found out that she was ineligible for in-state tuition and financial aid, she was part of student government, the school choir, and was on the softball and track teams. However after realizing that her opportunities were limited, she quit all of these extra-curricular activities: “I quit so I could babysit for more hours so I could save up money for the fall as well as do more research on scholarship opportunities.” Even though these personal narratives seem anecdotal,

their consistency across respondents reveals that there is not a systematic approach to helping undocumented youth gain access to college, just as there usually is for other students in high school. Most of them are aware of the policies which affect them, but find out about them during the stressful period of college application and admissions, which seriously endangers their ability to attend institutions of higher education.

### *Consequences of acquiring knowledge about policies*

The majority of undocumented immigrants experience periods of depression and anxiety during their last couple of years in high school. These have been widely noted in the literature on the process of “learning to be undocumented” (Gonzales, 2010) and results from the discrepancy between the treatment of undocumented youth in the K-12 system and their exclusion from the higher education system. Many undocumented youths feel cheated after being told for years that their hard work would be rewarded, and after embracing the meritocratic philosophy of the American educational system. Elias (NJ) explains his shock when he was told by his high school guidance counselor that it was going to be “difficult, if not impossible,” for him to go to college: “I had grown up with the idea that if you work hard, and you do what you have to do, then you can go to school. They can’t say no.” These episodes are even more acute among New Jersey respondents, where the financial burden of pursuing a college degree is multiplied due to lack of access to in-state tuition. Elias was the captain of his track team in high school and was offered an athletic scholarship at a private college in the state. However this was not enough to ease the financial burden on his family: “I went there for a semester, but I had to drop out of school because I was working to help my family out. And it was just too much stuff going on, my body could not take it no more. I had to pick between working and studying.” For Sara (NJ), the inability to pay in-state fees meant that she would

pay over 350 dollars per credit rather than 134 dollars. She describes herself in high school as someone who was “un-hopeful about everything,” until she found out she could go to college when the local community college lifted the ban on admissions for undocumented students. Omar (NJ), who attends a public university in New Jersey, can only take one class per semester, which costs him 2,700 dollars. Also because of costs, Graciela (NJ) was only able to take 15 credits of classes at a community college in New Jersey over the course of three years, because “I would have to work and save before I could take a class. And at the time I was not only dealing with paying for school, but I also needed to pay rent and my house, I needed to help my parents out. So it was two burdens.”

It is important to note, however, that even with access to financial aid, attending college may not be easy for undocumented youths. This was the case for most of the respondents in the New York sample, who were all eligible for in-state tuition. In that state, lack of access to financial aid also places a great financial burden on those who decide to attend a 4-year university. This has consequences on the regularity of attendance, and on students’ sense of belonging within their own school. Juana (NY) is currently attending a senior CUNY college. She explains that even though she has access to in-state tuition, she still needs to balance work and part-time attendance: “I started selling bracelets to make up for the costs of books and transportation and [...] supplies. And then someone [...] donated money for me and just paid for a whole semester of school. So [it] was ups and downs. That semester I took five classes, [and] the semester before I had only taken one class, and the semester after that I only took three classes, so it was all kinds of craziness.” This type of irregular attendance prevents her from making clear plans for her future like declaring a major, from feeling comfortable in the college building itself, and from making meaningful connections with her classmates.

Most undocumented youths displayed a strong lack of trust in elected officials, along with negative views of government. Even if the United States usually compared better than their country of origin, the world of politics is usually associated with deceit and guardedness. This is the case in both New Jersey and New York. Yanelly (NY) explained that politicians usually “forget what they proposed, and what we elected them on. They don’t go back to what we need. They go back to what benefits them and what will get them reelected. Sometimes they really don’t work for us.” In New Jersey, Virgilio (NJ) wished he could trust politicians, but explained that he just could not: “there is a lot of corruption going around, so I don’t trust anything around here.” Many undocumented youths were also suspicious of Deferred Action on Childhood Arrival, which they saw as a political move from President Obama and the Democrats ahead of the 2012 presidential election. Alejandro, who lives in New York, believes that “the only reason they did it was because they just wanted to get some votes, and it wasn’t really about trying to help out immigrants at all.” Similar views were expressed by many of the respondents, especially those who paid attention to politics. Omar (NJ) also explains that members of government are slowly becoming aware of the weight of Latino voters, and adjusting their policy accordingly: “now you’re hearing about comprehensive immigration reform because of the ‘Latino and immigrant vote’, it was such a big turnout that now they know that we are the future electoral base for the next elections.” The negative effect of public policies on undocumented youths’ opportunities did not encourage them to view government as an ally, but rather as a foe.

Politics was usually perceived in a negative way, and aside from the highly involved activists, most respondents displayed little knowledge and little interest in political matters. Politics was often associated in the minds of respondents with “corruption,” “evils,” inequalities, out of control “partisanship,” inefficiency and manipulation. This was the case

whether the respondents were asked about their local politicians, or about the elected officials representing their district or state in the United States Congress. Few respondents were familiar with the leaders of the undocumented youth movement. Surprisingly, those who had already been involved with activities promoting the DREAM Act, either in high school or in college, were not necessarily able to name leaders in the movement, or representatives in national institutions. Government and political activities were more often than not seen as something foreign that they themselves had very little control over.

### *Policy and predisposition to participate*

An interesting development here is that even though increase in time spent is usually associated with greater levels of assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006; Waters and Jiménez, 2005), and with greater political activity (Bloemraad, 2006; DeSipio et al., 1998), here length of time was likely to be associated with a greater distance from government and with less trust in elected officials. This is consistent with the concept of dissonant acculturation in which immigrants are driven to oppose the mainstream and to become part of an underclass (Alba and Waters, 2011). Time spent in the United States gives immigrant youths more opportunities to experience the policies established by the state where they live, but it also gives them more time to travel and meet immigrants from other states. With this knowledge in hand, they are able to situate themselves in relation to the government, and learn over time whether they are considered by state policies as a “deserving” or an “undeserving” group (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Sense of deservedness is also something that is not spread equally among all immigrants, even for members of the same family. Even if most respondents did consider themselves as worthy of immigration reform and of a quick path to citizenship, some respondents did not extend the same degree of “worthiness” to all undocumented immigrants,

including their own parents. In New York, Yanely explains why there should be a distinction, and her explanation mostly centers on something that is often heard in the public narrative surrounding immigration reform, which is the level of awareness among undocumented immigrants that they are doing something “wrong” by coming to the United States without authorization. She explains that her parents do not necessarily need a pathway to citizenship the way students do: “I would love it if they got [citizenship], because they deserve it, but they knew what they were coming here for. It was for a job.” In New Jersey, Hugo had a similar view: “I don’t really see why people are asking for more [than the proposed reform], because after all, we have to admit it, we are illegal immigrants and we came here without permission. It’s not our country.” For these respondents, undocumented immigrants have to take responsibility for their actions, and therefore give up on some of their claims over public goods.

The difference in deservedness and on immigrants’ ability to make claims on government had consequences both at the state and at the federal level. Most respondents did not hesitate to make claims on public goods provided by state government as residents of the state, such as access to in-state tuition and financial aid. However, their claims on federal policies were much more subdued. In dealing with state officials, most respondents did not hesitate to state that they should be treated like other students from their schools, and gain access to similar opportunities, especially financial ones. Hugo (NJ) for example, who did not want to insist on granting citizenship to all undocumented immigrants, preferred to focus on New Jersey policies which he viewed as affecting him more directly: “I don’t see [citizenship] as important as getting a drivers license.” In dealing with the federal government, many displayed an internalization of their position as “outsiders” and hesitated to ask for “too much” from the federal government concerning immigration reform. For Yanely (NY), a good strategy would be to focus on students, which she knows could create a rift within the movement: “Some [...]

would always want everyone, all undocumented immigrants to be covered. But sometimes I kind of disagree with it. [...] maybe not everyone should, because that's asking too much. I think you should back it up a little bit, focus on students or graduates, [...] I just thought that we should cut it down a little bit, just so it's a little more realistic." These young immigrants used rhetorical elements of "fairness" toward the American people in order to justify their, or their parents', exclusion from a quick path to citizenship. They also did not hesitate to support fines for having lived in the United States without legal status, background checks, and increased security on the border with Mexico.

The main difference in this case came from those who had high levels of involvement with the undocumented students' movement, whether at the state level or at the federal level. Those who were politically involved were much more radical in their demands on the federal government, and based these claims on information they had learned through their involvement, especially regarding deportation figures, taxes paid by undocumented immigrants, and the hard work they had done in school. Omar in New Jersey did not hesitate to indicate that even though president Obama had introduced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, he had also deported 400,000 people per year. His argument took away the possibility that undocumented immigrants "owed" anything to the government because of their presence in the United States. In New York, Patricia mentioned watching documentaries like *Harvest of Empire*, which establish a relationship between U.S. foreign policies in Latin America and high levels of migration from these countries to the United States: "And it's not just a coincidence, right? There is so much involvement from the US in those countries that it has pushed people to come here." For her, the emphasis should not be on what immigrants can do to improve their status, but on the responsibility of the U.S. government in creating where migration becomes a



necessity. In these cases, “fairness” should be at the center of legislative proposals, but in the sense of fairness to the immigrants rather than to the American people.

These arguments came from youths who had become more involved politically because of their alienated situation. As I discussed with Virgilio and Luis from New Jersey, there are usually two ways to respond to exclusion: accept this marginalized status and move on to work as a means of fulfillment, or reject it and attempt to improve one’s situation. For Virgilio (NJ), improving one’s situation meant pushing himself in high school and college in order to get a good job. For his twin brother Luis (NJ), improving his situation meant taking a stand against exclusionary policies and becoming more active politically, which is why in college he joined a Social Justice club. Facing adversity, some undocumented youths took it upon themselves to prove to the people around them – and to themselves – that they were not going to accept these limitations. For Laura, going to a New Jersey community college right out of high school was crucial in maintaining her self-esteem and avoiding marginalization: “I knew I had to go to college right away [...] I thought, if I don’t do it now, I’m never going to do it. I needed to prove to people that I could do it.” Gaining access to college almost appears as a redeeming stage in their lives. Leandra (NJ) for example decided to tell her friends about her status after becoming more involved in the movement, and after “learning how it [was] not [her] fault.” After hearing negative comments about immigrants and being denied access to in-state tuition, “it sort of makes you feel like it’s your fault [so] when I was in high school I thought there was something wrong with me. But now that [...] I know the whole political game that’s going on, I understand that it’s not my fault.” With more political knowledge comes the understanding that the state is also responsible for their situation, and that political mobilization is necessary.

### **Differences in mobilization by state**

Based on the data collected in the survey, which included both documented and undocumented respondents, the most significant factors having an effect on political activity are political efficacy, experience with discrimination, state of residence, and status. It is individual characteristics like sense of political efficacy, experience with discrimination, and immigration status which have more effect than an outside characteristic like college enrollment. One possible explanation for the difference in mobilization across the states is the availability of in-state tuition for undocumented youths in the state of New York. Due to this statute, there is less need for immediate mobilization on the part of this group as opposed to those living in New Jersey, where at the time in-state tuition was being debated in the legislature. Access to in-state tuition delays the impact of exclusionary policies until young undocumented immigrants enter the labor market. This ultimately diminishes the potential for early political mobilization. Nevertheless, the cost of in-state tuition remains very high for students who mostly come from low-income families, and the need to secure greater access to college through state aid provided a cause for mobilization in 2012 and 2013.

Another possible explanation for the differences in mobilization lies with the degree of professionalization of advocacy groups in the two states. On the one hand, organizations in New York are older, since most of them were created or expanded at the time when in-state tuition was adopted in 2002. They also benefit from a well-established and diverse network, which includes immigrant organizations, youth organizations, community organizations, teachers' groups, African American advocates, and elected officials in the State legislature. As a result, the presence of multiple groups with various agendas means that it is increasingly difficult to reach consensus on the goals of the movement. A member from one of the largest

New York-based organizations advocating for financial aid acknowledged the challenges faced by a large coalition:

“Some people were really for the Dream Act, and some people were [...] with the idea, but did not like that it was so complicated, so heavy monetarily, so there was a consensus... Well, not necessarily a consensus, there was a majority that wanted this bill to actually move forward, and it had to be more specific. Like, you can’t have health insurance and TAP in the same thing because they’re very costly to the budget. And drivers’ licenses, we had lost that fight, and we still have people in the movement who are hoping to make this work. But we lost that fight, and some didn’t want to get involved with that fight again, and TAP seemed like a more reasonable one. [...] Consensus is when everyone agrees, and I don’t think everyone agrees, but that’s what the coalition said. The majority felt that it needed to be a simple bill.”  
(New York, 2013)

Throughout the 2012 and 2013 campaign, most of the activities of these groups were directed at pressuring the legislature through institutional means and holding events to raise awareness. They conducted legislative visits and held “coming out” rallies. The key element of the New York campaign was that it was undertaken by professional organizations who were familiar with the political process, and who remained within the confine of the traditional political process.

On the other hand, organizations in New Jersey are much more recent, and efforts to gather a coalition are still under way. Most of the efforts of the New Jersey campaign were directed at recruiting more participants, training them, and relying on non-institutional, grassroots tactics to put pressure on the legislature. When legislative visits over the spring of 2013 proved ineffective, the movement switched to sit-ins at the Governor’s reelection campaign

headquarters, inviting the press to a “mock class” on common immigration-related myths. Starting in September 2013, the alliance in New Jersey adopted a much more adversarial tone, which led formalized organizations such as the Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey to leave the movement (Kratovil, 2013). As Piven and Cloward (1979) have noted, the timing of disruptive tactics is key to their success. Undocumented youths and their allies in New Jersey put pressure on the Governor and his Republican allies in the legislature based on two electoral deadlines: the election of state legislators and of the Governor of the State on November 5, 2013, and the presidential election of November 2016, for which the Governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie, is considered to be a serious contender in the Republican primary.

The organizations in New Jersey were therefore able to mobilize immigrant youths much more, while training them on how best to advocate for in-state tuition. They launched a campaign which was more disruptive, and which effectively trained its members. The difference between the two state’s styles of organizing is similar to what Skocpol (2003) described when she spoke of the increasing professionalization of organizations. In New York, the movement is increasingly managed “from the top”, which limits the level of recruitment of new members into the movement. In New Jersey however, the movement relies on activities that “do with” members, and therefore increase their disposition to participate in civic and political movements. Beside organizational styles, public policies can offer compensatory resources which may also encourage greater levels of participation.

### **Resources for political mobilization**

Studies of the movement have shown the role of institutional and legal developments in fostering mobilization. However we must acknowledge the role of place along with that of time in the creation and the achievements of various movements. Place affects the availability and

amount of resources available to undocumented youths, such as transportation, communication, access to education, and trust in government, all of which may ultimately create obstacles to, or support for, mobilization. Public policies which affect access to college can not only lower political efficacy among undocumented youths who do not attend college, but it can also limit their contact with supportive campus officials and students from other groups due to the type of institutions which they attend. In this section I will look at the differences between the two states in terms of resources which have been made available for their 2013 campaigns, focusing on state financial aid in New York, and in-state tuition in New Jersey.

### *Reliance on social media*

With the rise of national networks such as United We Dream advocating undocumented youths' rights, along with the possibilities offered by social media, many resources have been made available to undocumented students. As Omar, an activist from New Jersey, notes, Facebook has helped undocumented youths overcome distance to connect with each other. He explains how he found out that one of his classmates was undocumented after a New Jersey bill providing in-state tuition failed in the legislative assembly back in 2009: "I realized that my friends' status was kind of depressing, and I was like, 'why are you sad?' And she told me about it. And I was like, 'I'm and documented too.' That's how I found out." Groups like the New Jersey Dream Act Coalition, the New Jersey Tuition Equity for Dreamers, but also the CUNY Dream Teams and the New York State Youth Leadership Council have all made efforts to increase their online presence through social media and twitter, and by posting videos and creating email lists providing information about legislative proposals or their events. Silvia (NY) is one of the co-founders of a CUNY Dream Team, and she explained her strategy for reaching out to the greatest number of people: "it's been crazy because our mailing list for the

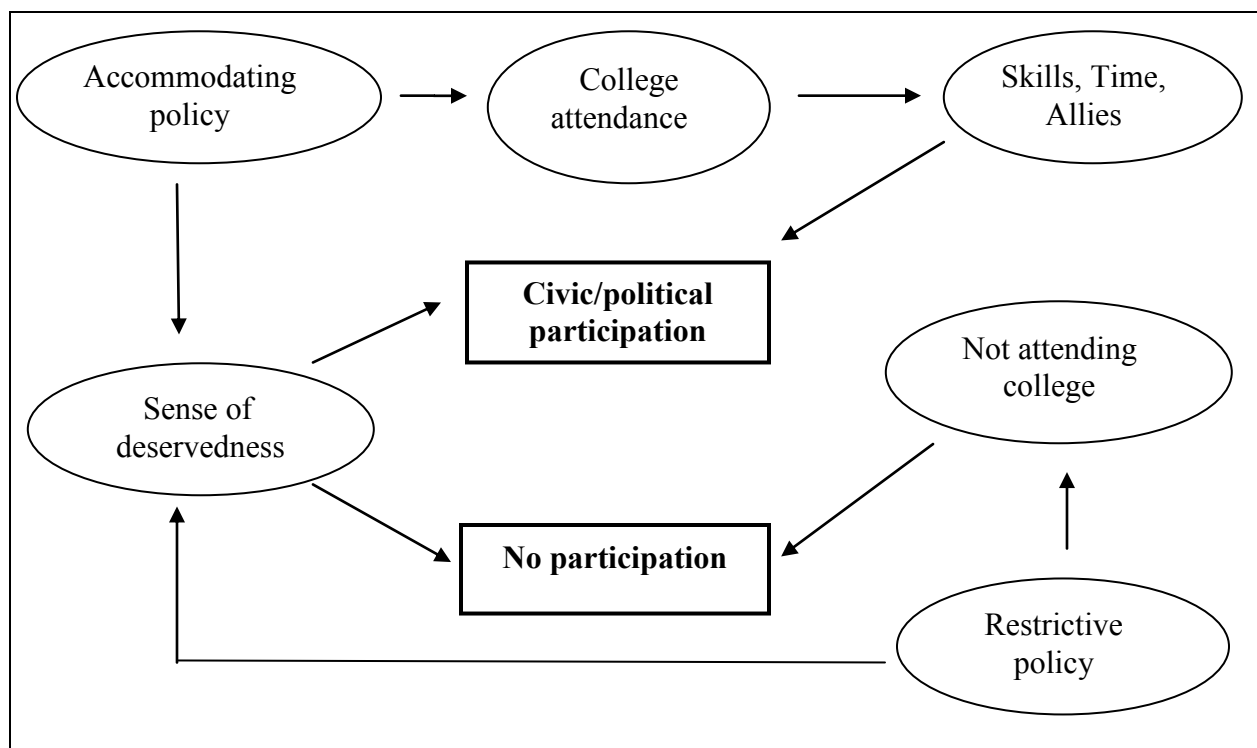
Dream Team is now over 300 emails. And this started in 2011 basically, getting emails from people who were interested, and that's not just [people from the school], but also the media, having people from other colleges and universities [...] So we have reached 340 something people." She was at the time designing a website for her team, with the goal of providing a sign-up page so that anyone could obtain information about policies, mobilization efforts, and changes in immigration reform. In addition, the website would provide information about scholarship opportunities for undocumented students.

Even for those who are not activists, online resources provide a great way to obtain information, without necessarily being involved in the movement. They can rely on online exchange of information from Facebook pages and Twitter feeds, which allow organizations to disseminate information quickly and for free. This was the case for Jorge (NJ), who was looking for information about the process of applying for deferred action: "I was glued to the immigration website, USCIS. [...] I was checking information there. And then I got a bunch of friends here in New Jersey that are activists or some sort of thing, so I was checking their Facebook status and everything that they posted about, or some other website." Social media constitute a tremendous resource for undocumented youths. On the one hand they help overcome issues relative to distance and costs, and provide means of spreading information almost instantaneously. On the other hand, they are not exclusive, meaning that undocumented youth do not need to be politically active in order to acquire information about the movement or about policy changes. However, place has also played a crucial role in increasing or limiting opportunities to participate due to its association with specific laws, resources, and contexts of reception.

*Resources from college access: civic skills*

The main resources available to youths for political mobilization are a greater level of education (and therefore information about policies, means of involvement, and political efficacy), greater inter-group connections, and support from school officials in their attempt to organize and make claims on their respective government. In this sense, public policies affecting access to in-state tuition are crucial in providing the resources necessary for participation described in the literature, especially civic skills and time. They can also create a context in which undocumented youths are made to feel deserving of making claims on public goods. As Figure 1 below shows, there are many factors which can affect undocumented youths' resources and disposition to participate in civic and political activities.

**Figure 7.1 Smoothed causal network for civic/political participation among undocumented youths**



As the figure above shows, accommodating policies and restrictive policies which affect access to college provide varying contexts of reception in the sense that they will make civic and political participation more or less likely to happen. Accommodating policies have been shown to increase college attendance among undocumented youths, which leads to an increase in resources available such as civic skills, time, and allies. These policies also help foster a positive image of the group being targeted, and thus support their claims on public goods. On the other hand, restrictive policies can deter undocumented youths from attending college, which reduces the amount of resources available to them, and the possibility that they will be recruited for political activities. In addition, these restrictive policies create a negative image of the target group, thus decreasing the potential amount of public support for their mobilization efforts. Nevertheless, restrictive policies in higher education can also lead to a “jarring” understanding of one’s place in society, especially due to the existence of inclusive policies in the K-12 educational system. This conflict over a group’s sense of deservedness can spur an effort to reestablish balance in the group’s overall treatment by public policies, and therefore lead to more political participation.

Many youths who have recently become involved in the movement have indicated that they knew very little about state policies before joining a group, whether in their community or in their college. Juan, who is involved with a Queens-based immigrant organization, makes the connection between his college education and his involvement in politics: “In school obviously you learn how to make a law and everything, but here we talk to the politicians, we go to Washington, we go to Albany, and you’re really involved.” What he learns about policy at the office, he can then share with his friends and his community: “it’s helping my community. It’s not just on immigration issues, it’s... They talk about everything else that is happening in the community, like Stop and Frisk, immigration, the Dream Act.” A college education is therefore



necessary to make sense of the exchanges witnessed while demonstrating and rallying for the student movement.

For Alvaro, who just graduated from a New Jersey community college, attending college allowed him to join student groups like a Dream Team, which gave him information about financial opportunities within his school. He was also able to secure a research internship with a professor from the college to work on a project studying the effects of immigration policy in the Newark area. Jesus, who is part of the Honors Program in his community college in New Jersey, obtained information about mixed-status families and deportation policies during a meeting with other students: “our co-vice president for the honors society, she gave a really good presentation for her capstone about ICE and how they break up families and how it’s really hard to get in contact with them and change some things. It was a very good presentation.” Thus attending college can provide undocumented youths with information that they may not have been able to obtain on their own, but also with skills that they would otherwise not have developed.

Students who are barred from in-state tuition are prevented from the benefits of higher education in several ways. They sometimes opt out of college altogether, preferring to focus on their or their families’ immediate needs. Jorge managed to attend a community college in New Jersey at the in-county rates because of the personal connections of his guidance counselor. He knows that he was very lucky, since most of his undocumented friends now pay out-of-state tuition: “there were other counselors at that time, [who] were like, ‘you don’t have no papers so I can’t help you, that’s it for you. You finished high school, go get a job, but you can’t do whatever you want with your life.’” When college seems inaccessible due to financial barriers, or due to the perception that people from one’s community never attend, undocumented youths often prefer to get a job right away. That was the case even in New York for many of Yanely’s

friends in Brooklyn: “most of [the people I knew] were undocumented. [...] They took a different road. [...] this country, they don’t really give us the resources. They don’t give us incentives to pursue higher careers. So most of them just got stuck, [...] They either just dropped out of high school, or they graduated [and took] bad jobs.” Other interviewees mentioned friends and family members who did not consider college as a means to improve their lives overall, especially because of the financial costs associated with attending.

*Resources from college access: time*

Time is a crucial resource when it comes to civic engagement and political participation. It is most often related to one’s occupation and income – other predictors of engagement in the literature – but the use of one’s time also reflects their priorities. Lack of time to participate can be caused by low-paying jobs which require individual to hold more than one job at once, or from lack of funding in college, which require students to work to pay for their tuition. Lack of time therefore often deters youths from civic engagement and political activity.

Most undocumented students in New Jersey work to pay for their education, sometimes several jobs. This is the case even for those who have managed to secure funding from their institutions. Alejandra, (NJ) who was accepted in the Honors Program of her community college and therefore does not have to pay tuition, still holds two jobs. In high school she worked at a factory to help her parents, and now in college she combines two jobs as a teller and a sales associate on top of an internship for school. Because of her schedule, her grades went down her first semester in college, and she was put on probation from the program, which meant that she had to pay tuition for two semesters. Working in college has several consequences on students’ ability to be involved politically, but mostly because it prevents them from having enough time to get involved. For example, Alejandra (NJ) explains that she

is very excited about the Dream Team which was just created at her college, but cannot fully participate in it: “I was not here when they first started it because I had to be working at my other job.” Most of the New Jersey respondents who were enrolled in college shared the same experience. Jorge (NJ) for example did not have time to be involved in clubs in his community college: “Since I have to pay for everything, I have to work. I would be working today if I was still in college. I had to put college little bit on hold because they still owed money from last semester. So right now I’m just working.”

The situation is the same in New York, in spite of the state having adopted more accommodating policies. For example Alejandro (NY) explained why he was unable to participate in events organized by W.A.L.K. – a youth organization within Tepeyac, a New York City-based organization which mostly serves recent Mexican immigrants: “I was also working when I was in that group. So most of the time that the events occurred was on weekends and I would work weekends, so I couldn’t go to the events. And I couldn’t, [...] I did not want to miss work for that.” This was also the case for students who were in college and needed to pay in-state tuition. Gael (NY) for example has a friend who is involved with the undocumented students’ movement, and who invites him to rallies and other events, but his school and work schedule prevent him from joining: “he’s always asking me, ‘do you want to come to this or that?’ But I can’t because of all the stuff, work. I told him, [...] ‘I’m in school right now, and I work every other day when I’m not in school.’ I just can’t afford to go and do that.” Because the priority for undocumented youths is to avoid being a burden on their families, work sometimes takes precedence over their education, and over their commitment to any social movement.

To compensate for the lack of support from the state, some institutions of higher education have decided to provide aid to some undocumented students directly. This means that in

addition to the contrast in state policies, there can be a great degree of variation in the level of participation of undocumented youths based on the institution they attend. The examples of Juana in New York and Javier in New Jersey provide a striking illustration of this situation. In New York, Juana has to work to pay for her in-state tuition, which means that her college attendance is irregular from semester to semester: “I was able to afford my first semester of school, I took three classes. But then the next semester I wasn’t able to afford it, so I took a semester off. And then I had [...] a job my following semester.” As a result, she has little time to be involved in any of the clubs at her college and is missing the opportunity to establish strong connections to the community, unlike other students:

“I’m not able to be as involved in campus [...] because every semester is [...] unknown, right? [...] I come to school and then I leave right away, because I have to be somewhere else. So even things like [...] being involved in school, joining the clubs here, joining a sorority, going to the events that they have on campus, I could never make them because I just come and go, right? [...] So sometimes it feels like you’re a tourist.”

Because the policy of the state does not allow her to qualify for state aid, she has to work to pay for her tuition, which can be over \$5,000 per year. By contrast, Javier in New Jersey was able to benefit from a program established at a community college which covered his entire tuition. He explained that this program is what allowed him to have time to be involved in the community while in college: “The thing is that, what we had at [my college] that allowed me to have that time [to be involved] was the honors program, because I did not have any other worries outside of me hitting the books. Now it is a lot tougher because I have to deal with work, I have to deal with school. I have to work to be able to live at the dorm and buy my own

food.” His experience shows how much of a difference providing aid for tuition makes in terms of relieving undocumented students from the necessity to work to pay for college.

*Resources from college access: allies*

For undocumented youths who decide to pursue their education beyond high school, their only choice is more often than not to attend a community college. As Virgilio (NJ) mentioned, students who stay quiet about their status in high school do not get the proper information, and so “they end up going to community college.” Financial considerations also come first when choosing which school to attend. Hugo explains his college choice: “I wanted to go to Montclair [NJ] but I could not afford it. It was way too expensive and I’m not allowed to receive financial aid or loans, so was really hard for me. I ended up at [a community college].” Attending community college or working rather than going to a four-year university limits the type of inter-group connections that these youths make. As the literature shows, students in community colleges tend to be youths who live in the local area, therefore limiting contact with youths from other parts of the state. In New York, Jose (NY) picked his community college not simply because of the program offered, but also because of distance: “I know [this other school] has performing arts, but it’s all the way there so... I live around here you know.” Omar (NJ), who is on leave from a four-year public university in New Jersey, first decided to attend a community college because he “knew that they accepted undocumented students because one of [his] cousins used to go there [...] and [he] was familiar with the area.” He ended up spending about 15 to 16 hours on campus each day because he would get dropped off and picked up by his father who worked two jobs. Attending community college near one’s place of residence limits the amount of contact with people from other groups, and prevents undocumented youths from gaining the same experiences as their documented peers. Alejandra

(NJ) expressed frustration at being denied the same opportunities as her high school friends who got to attend college out of state or away from home: “you don’t get that experience that you hear your friends getting. You hear them coming back from college and they talk about this and that. They’re like, I’m going to go here and I’m going to go there, and you’re like, that’s great.” Financial considerations push undocumented students to community colleges and therefore limit their exposure to different locales and cultures.

Other scholars have shown that community college are disproportionately attended by students who come from low-income families, and by students from racial and ethnic minorities (Garza and Landek, 2004; Jauregui, Slate and Brown, 2008), which further reduces the opportunities for weak-ties creation for Latino undocumented students (Granovetter, 1973). In her New York community college, Alicia regrets not being able to spend more time on her campus, which is not in the same neighborhood where she lives: “I’m a part-time student [...] and I work full-time, so it’s hard for me to look for some talks. It’s not as nice for me. [...] it’s hard for me to even socialize with other classmates.” In New Jersey, Alvaro explains that he originally joined the Dominican Student Association at his college to avoid being too isolated: “that was kind of the way for me to, you know, get to know people in the school. Because at the time I was only taking two classes. I came into school and I just left.” This is important in order for undocumented youths to realize that they are part of a community beyond their community of origin, and that their immigration status is not an isolated incident. As mentioned above, New Jersey respondents were much more likely to believe in high school that they were the only undocumented person in their school or town, and meeting people of the same status helped build their confidence.

Finally, attending community college may deprive undocumented youths from the support of highly visible campus officials. During a strategy meeting for the New Jersey Tuition Equity

Campaign, the issue being discussed was how to put pressure on Governor Christie to convince him to endorse the tuition equity bill in the New Jersey legislature. To do so, the campaign managed to rally support from officials with high levels of political capital, such as religious leaders, but also university presidents throughout the state, who wrote open letters indicating their support for immigrant-friendly legislation. In October 2013, the governor eventually came out publicly in support of tuition equality. The support of university presidents can almost only be gained by students who are actually registered at these universities and by their allies. Thus by restricting access to public universities, state policies have an effect on the resources which are available to undocumented youths for political mobilization, especially in terms of building support systems and networks of allies.

#### *Other policies affecting mobilization*

Other policies adopted at the state level may affect the mobilization efforts of undocumented youths, and must be recognized here. Education policy mandating civics classes and volunteering requirements in high school are associated with an increase in civic and political engagement after high school (Duke, Skay, Pettingell, and Borowsky, 2009). Juan, for example, had to do community service for his New York City high school in order to be able to graduate: “My high school requires 25 hours in order to graduate from high school. It’s part of the requirements. So I started volunteering in 2010, and since then I’ve been coming to this place.” He chose to volunteer at an organization in his neighborhood which helps immigrants, and has since become a permanent member of the organization.

Transportation throughout the state can also facilitate or hinder contact with other individuals and mobilization efforts. The map below shows the differences in access to public transportation for the New York City – Northern New Jersey metropolitan area, with the state

line indicated as a red dotted line. Public policies which provide greater resources for public transportation can help support a movement led by individuals with low resources, and who are for the most part prevented from obtaining a driver's license. As can be seen on the map, there is a great degree of discrepancy in the availability of public transportation in the two states. On the one hand, the New Jersey side of the metropolitan area (on the left side of the red dotted line) has less mass transit opportunities. The New York side offers more concentration, and thus allows its resident to rely more on public transportation. On the other hand, public transit in New Jersey is very unidirectional: most of the train lines primarily serve New York Pennsylvania Station, and there exist only a couple of major transportation hubs in New Jersey, such as Newark Penn Station and Secaucus Junction.





attend college in the state. For Claudia (NJ), getting to work or school was a challenge for years: “[public transportation] is not that good. It’s mostly buses and they run every hour or so, every two hours sometimes. The closest train station, you have to drive to, and that takes you either to New York or to Newark Penn station, but it does not take you to the local areas.” Another participant, Hugo, met with me for his interview near Newark Pennsylvania Station, but told me that he commonly drives without a license, because the train schedule is too complicated.

Omar (NJ), who is involved with the New Jersey Tuition Equality campaign, explained that getting to an event or a rally requires a lot of logistics: “We just use NJ transit. So that makes things a lot more inconvenient [...] We’ll manage multiple buses, or whatever we need to do. [...] One of our members just drives without a license, just because. Some have licenses from out of state [...] So we make it work.” During a strategy meeting held by a New Jersey-based Dream Team, establishing modes of transportation was central to securing enough participants at a rally held in front of one of Governor Chris Christie’s campaign offices. The person in charge took pains to draw a chart on a board to count the number of cars available, and the number of people who could fit in each one. Phone calls were also immediately made to secure transportation from potential drivers or their parents.

By comparison, transportation almost never came up as an issue when talking to undocumented youths who were living in the New York side of the metropolitan area. For most of the interviewees who lived in New York City, public transportation was often presented as an advantage of city living, as opposed to living in another area or in another state. This was the case for Santiago (NY), who mentioned transportation issues in relation to the deportation stories he was familiar with: “[I heard of] the people who got deported because of driving without a license. Here you don’t have to drive so that’s nice. [he laughs] in New York... I

mean, in other states you need a car to get around.” Within the New York sample, the only exceptions came from those who had grown up outside of New York City. Ana, who grew up in the suburbs north of New York City, is currently attending a senior CUNY College, but cannot join any clubs: “commuting does not really... I cannot really get involved because of the commute. And I come on Mondays and Wednesdays, and it’s usually Tuesdays and Thursdays when they have the clubs here [...] There’s really nothing, no transportation where I live.” Access to transportation is so limited that she actually has to rely on New Jersey Transit to get to her college in Manhattan. Place therefore plays an important role in undocumented youths’ ability to mobilize politically, but we must look beyond those policies which provide access to college.

## **Conclusion**

The results indicate that greater access to public higher education provides greater resources for mobilization, such as political knowledge, support networks, weak ties, and allies who have access to government. Even if they are not always associated with greater levels of trust in government, policies promoting access to college were associated with an increased likelihood to make claims on government, whether at the state or at the federal level. These results are consistent with what is already found in the literature, but additional investigations highlighted the surprising role of restrictive policies.

Overall, the analyses reveal that greater difficulties to gain access to college may foster among some undocumented youths a stronger necessity to question the status quo and their marginalized status in it, which can lead to academic motivation but also to political mobilization. This could provide an example of “belligerent” incorporation in which undocumented youths become involved in opposition to policies which deny them state

benefits. This is true even though analyses reveal that state policies which limit access to higher education effectively reduce the number of resources for political mobilization available to undocumented youths, such as weak ties, support from campus officials with access to government, and political knowledge. Decreasing access to higher education also forces students to attend community colleges, to attend college part-time, and to work, thus also limiting the time that is available for participating in political activities.

When studying undocumented youths' political mobilization, it is essential to take into account the role of place. State laws affecting access to college often represent the first time that public policies have a direct impact on undocumented youths' personal lives and on their ability to make plans for the future. State policies regulating access to in-state tuition can limit the type of institutions which young immigrants will attend, when they do not altogether deter them from going to college. As a result, state policies limiting access to college were more likely to be associated with a greater sense of alienation on the part of undocumented youths than those which granted in-state tuition. These policies, no matter their content, are also the driving element behind the mobilization among undocumented youths, since they not only provide the motivation behind political participation, but they also shape the type and amount of resources which are available to young undocumented activists.

In order to study the mobilization efforts of undocumented youths, more research needs to take place to study how different groups react to state-level policies. This particular project focused on immigrants from Latin America, but additional research needs to be conducted on the differences between undocumented youths from various parts of the world. National origin may not only affect the resources which are available for political mobilization, but also the community's response to government and policies. The following chapters address the role of public policies in fostering a specific public image of undocumented youths, and on the issue of

deservedness, especially in relation to the “perfect DREAMer” narrative which has been promoted over the last few years. The experiences of undocumented youths with public policies such as the DREAM Act or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival vary greatly in regards to costs, opinion, and subsequent behavior. In addition, several advocacy groups are now turning away from the public perception of DREAMers as straight-A students due to its potential for excluding other undocumented youths, especially parents and low-skilled workers.

## **Chapter 8: Deservedness and immigration reform among undocumented youth**

Since 1996, Congress has failed to adopt a comprehensive reform of immigration. Multiple incremental changes have been introduced, especially in regards to enforcement after the attacks of September 11, 2001. In addition, Congress has also been considering the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, most commonly known as the DREAM Act. Multiple versions of the bill have been introduced since 2001, but the main aspects of the policy remained the same. The goal was to provide deportation relief for a specific category of undocumented immigrants, those who are young, have been living in the United States for a long period of time, and are either enrolled in college or in the armed forces. The bill would provide these youths with a temporary status which could eventually lead to permanent residence and citizenship. This bill essentially defined which group of undocumented immigrants was considered “deserving” in the eyes of Congress, and who would be portrayed as having earned a path to citizenship. In 2013, while Congress was considering another comprehensive immigration reform bill, a version of the DREAM Act was included in the legislation under consideration, but the bill has yet to be adopted and signed into law.

The last major change in immigration legislation and enforcement was actually introduced by the executive branch rather than by Congress. In June 2012, the President announced a new directive for the implementation of immigration law entitled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This program effectively provides a stay of deportation of two years for some undocumented youths, namely those who are long-term residents of the United States, have

attended school or college, and have never been in trouble with the law. The policy reflected the narrative constructed over the last decade by immigrant activists about undocumented youths, who have been consistently presented as young, driven, U.S.-educated youth who came to the United States “through no fault of their own” and therefore deserve accommodating policies. This chapter focuses on the generation of such a narrative, and on the strategic choices made by immigrant advocates over the last ten years. It relies on the punctuated equilibrium theory of policymaking, which assumes that positive outcomes are the results of changes in policy venues and policy image.

The campaign pursued since 2001 by undocumented youths has successfully transformed the policy image associated with young undocumented immigrants and has separated them from other, less “deserving” immigrants. This is reflected in the discourse of undocumented immigrants who were interviewed for this project, especially when discussing Comprehensive Immigration Reform. However, the most recent generation of activists is now taking into consideration the possibility that this type of narrative has the potential of further marginalizing other undocumented immigrants, especially those who may not fit the “perfect DREAMer” narrative like high school or college dropouts, or even older immigrants. This chapter presents recent developments that indicate a shift in the strategy pursued for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, in an attempt to expand the policy affecting undocumented youths and their families.

### **Effects of changes in federal policy**

#### *Policy changes after September 11, 2001*

Federal policies have serious effects on the lives of all immigrants, including undocumented immigrants. Changes in federal immigration policies since 1996 have been

noted to alter families' choices regarding naturalization and access to benefits (Oboler, 2006), but also their strategy in moving to the United States. This became apparent based on the life stories collected from undocumented youths for this project. Families make choices based on the one hand on the opportunities offered by the federal government, but also on the other hand on the immediate, short-term needs of their families. This is why some immigrant families did not actively pursue a path to citizenship in the early and mid-1990s in spite of their undocumented status. As Andrea (NJ) explains, there was no immediate need to adjust the status of members of the families because being undocumented did not represent an obstacle on the job market. She describes her family's approach to naturalization: "one of the reasons [...] why my parents did not adjust their status when it was easier, pre-2001, was because first there was no need to. There were ways that you could be incorporated into the system, whether it was employment through fake papers, or you could have a legitimate social security number and a legitimate license in the state of New Jersey. So you did not have a need to adjust your status, even if you had intentions of staying here permanently." For some families, staying undocumented became a conscious choice because of the ease through which employment could be found, combined with the lack of services provided to immigrants seeking naturalization. The educational effects of one's undocumented status were also delayed for the children in these families, since access to K-12 education was guaranteed by the 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision in the Supreme Court. Once restrictions were put in place following the 1996 immigration and welfare reforms, and following the 2001 attacks, more immigrant families became aware of the limitations associated with their status, and created a clientele groups for organizations and agencies providing immigration law services.

The choices made by immigrant families constitute a response to changes in federal policies, but also to contingent events that affect the behavior of the federal government. These



events can occur in their country of origin, such as changes in political regimes or eruptions of violence, but also in the host country, the United States. Several respondents explained that their families had had to adjust their original plans for moving to the United States due to changes in federal policies following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Immigrant families are aware of the choices they can make regarding their path to citizenship, but many of them did not anticipate the drastic changes which would follow 9/11. As Inez (NJ) explains, household heads usually meet with lawyers or family members already living in the United States to devise a strategy: “when we moved, the fastest way that my parents analyzed with the lawyer was that if we filed through my mom’s job it would come faster than asking through a relative [...]. We did that, but what happened was after 9/11 my mom’s company was not doing well and it closed down. [...] they dropped all the immigration cases that they were carrying, and [...] we got an order of deportation a few months later.”

In the case of Inez’ family, a prior choice had been made not to request residency through a relative, but to rely on the mother’s employer for sponsorship, which was presented as a quicker process. However, the 2001 terrorist attacks created economic difficulties for her mother’s company, which closed down and dropped all of the sponsorship procedures which had been started. The family therefore became undocumented a few years after moving to the United States because of unforeseen events. Andrea (NJ), whose family had delayed applying for status in the 1990s because it would not have brought any short-term benefits, explained that her family ultimately became “stuck” in their undocumented status because of changes to federal policy after the 1996 reforms and 2001: “after 9/11, after 96 and after 9/11, was when you really saw sharp restrictions on access to services and access to benefits, in every day to day operation where you needed to have this documentation. But by then it was too late.” Her family and many others had failed to adjust their status when federal policies might have

allowed for it, and when events in the host country led to more restrictions, the chances of adjusting one's status became near impossible.

After the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania, the federal government established more stringent policies regarding access to residency. Some of the provisions included in the 2001 Patriot Act for example were designed to make it easier for the federal government to deny entry, prosecute, and remove non-citizens from the United States (Lebowitz and Podheiser, 2002). Immigration reform between 1996 and 2001 had already provided the opportunity for the federal government to impose harsher sanctions on immigrants for committing a crime, but the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and decisions made by the Department of Justice allowed for more stringent regulations to be imposed on immigrants, such as the strict enforcement of address change reporting or mandatory detention for immigration violations – mostly ignored until then (Miller, 2005).

These changes had consequences for the living conditions and opportunities available to immigrant families already living in the United States. Jesus (NJ) explained that his family's income was seriously threatened due to immigration policy changes: "My dad was a really, really successful real estate agent [...] He had a license. [...] After 9/11, things got really hard. They asked for a lot more identification. He had a valid license up until... He was unable to renew it after a certain amount of time." As a result of the stricter enforcement of immigration policy, and of new policies established after 9/11, those who had been living undocumented in the United States for years had to adapt, both economically and in terms of obtaining a more permanent status. Jesus and his family had to move to a smaller home, and his mom started working. He himself took up a job in high school in order to help pay for the family's bills. Others decided to try different options in order to obtain residency. Several respondents reported a change in strategy, either among their friends or their families, from filing an

application for residency through work to solving one's problems through marriage with a U.S. citizen. Ivan (NJ) explains the change in strategy after his family was placed under an order of deportation: "it was family sponsorship through my mother's brother, who is a citizen. That type of application was usually quick, but I think a lot of it had to do with September 11 [...]. Everything got backlogged with more stringent requirements. It wasn't so easy, so that just [kept] creeping up and creeping up. And then people started getting married." Once the possibility of obtaining residency through work or through a relative became blocked or too difficult, another option emerged, that of marrying a U.S. citizen and applying for residency through their sponsorship. This option was mentioned by several respondents, many of them encouraged by their parents. However, only three of them actually went through with this path to citizenship, all of them with their actual partner. Nevertheless changes in federal policy following the 9/11 attacks led to changes in strategy on the part of immigrant families seeking a more secure status.

Finally, it is important to note that even if not all respondents interviewed were familiar with the most recent attempt at comprehensive immigration reform, most of them were aware of the drastic changes regarding immigration policy brought on by 9/11. Some of these changes affected the push for the federal DREAM Act, while other changes were associated with the type of actors now involved in immigration policy. As Roberto (NY) noted, the federal DREAM Act had been introduced prior to the 9/11 attacks, but efforts to push the bill forward stopped short after that. He explained this while talking about Teresa Li, one of the early student activists on the issue: "I always thought her story was just so sad. You know, she's supposed to meet with the Senate committee, about two days after 9/11, it was something like that. [Dick Durbin] was supposed to meet her [...] And then nothing happened because 9/11 did and everything froze after that. It just froze the entire situation."

Undocumented youths who are familiar with the progress of the DREAM Act through the U.S. Congress understand the limitations which were imposed after 9/11. However, what is also important is the fact that the attacks strengthened the perception of immigration which had emerged in the 1990s, one that is focused on its relationship with security issues rather than labor issues (Andreas, 1999). This change in perception allowed new actors to become involved in the immigration policy subsystem, such as representatives from security companies and from the military-industrial complex. This also did not escape some undocumented youths, who feel that the presence of such actors has a detrimental effect on the content of the most recent immigration reform. Miguel (NY) for example noticed: “you can definitely tell that there are many companies that are like, ‘okay, let the money be spilled, open up the faucet right now for the states’ [...] That is a recipe for disaster, for rampant corruption. [...] whoever is an official that has some actions in a company from this industry will be there [...] I mean, that has happened already since the Patriot Act [...] There are a lot of entrepreneurs out there who were taking advantage of this.” Events such as 9/11 therefore not only change the type of choices made by immigrant families, but also the strategies pursued by those involved in the creation and implementation of immigration policy. The 2001 attacks reinforced the idea that immigration is primarily a security issue. This has affected immigrant families’ ability to negotiate a path to citizenship, along with the labor market and educational opportunities available to their children.

### *Changes in college policies after 9/11*

Events such as the 2001 terrorist attacks also affected state-level policies on immigrants’ rights, especially those regarding access to in-state tuition. In the state of New York for example, undocumented students were allowed to pay in-state tuition in the state’s two largest

university systems, the City University of New York and the State University of New York, as early as in the 1980s. However, as Rincón (2008) notes, restrictions were put in place following the 1996 immigration reform and 9/11 which barred undocumented students from qualifying for in-state tuition at SUNY after 1998, and at CUNY in spring 2002. The changes in CUNY included cuts in the Peter Vallone scholarship, which were also available to undocumented youths. Following the changes in CUNY, several groups such as the Mexican American Student Alliance, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, and the Citizenship and Immigration Project came together in a coalition to promote state legislation that would provide in-state tuition for some undocumented youths. The bill was signed into law as early as August 9, 2002, and included a grandfather clause to include students who had paid out-of-state tuition after the earlier reversal of policy. These policies were adopted at the state level as a direct reaction to changes in federal immigration legislation and enforcement. Therefore undocumented youths are susceptible to feel the effects of changes in policy through their interaction with various levels of government.

Changes also came into effect following 9/11 in schools in New Jersey. Since the state did not allow in-state tuition for undocumented students, the changes were most likely implemented in community or county colleges. Just as they did in New York, these changes prompted a strong mobilization on the part of undocumented youths. As Sara (NJ) explained, changes in school and college policies are the driving factor behind the mobilization of undocumented youths and their allies: “the goals [of the movement] have changed. With my college for example, goal number one, two years ago, was to have the students be able to enroll. [...] after 9/11, they changed their policy completely, because of fear. And the goal now is to have them change their policy.” Following the 2001 attacks and the anti-immigrant rhetoric which emerged from it, some community and county colleges decided to modify their

tuition so that undocumented youth no longer qualified for the preferred rates. Several movements have been successful in reversing these policies, but since these institutions are independent the effects on undocumented youths – whether negative or positive – have been very concentrated geographically.

### **Policy introduction and emergence of the policy narrative**

#### *The Dream Act and DACA*

The successive introduction of Dream Act bills in Congress since 2001, along with state-level mobilization toward tuition policies, have sought to create a new image associated with immigration. According to the public policy literature, changes in policy require a change in the image and the core beliefs associated with the policy (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Sabatier, 1988). The change in policy image allows for more participants to gain access to the policymaking environment, while new core beliefs may change the direction and the beneficiaries of the policy. Policies such as the ones introduced by Dream Act bills and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals have helped create the image of the “perfect Dreamer”, the perfect undocumented youth, as the recipient of this accommodating policy. The “perfect Dreamer” narrative presents undocumented youths as straight-A students, who have never been in trouble with the law, and who have spent most of their lives in the United States. The key features of the narrative are directly created by the requirements included in these policies.

The original DREAM Act bill, (S.1291, 2001) directly focused on undocumented youths who were on their way to college, and intended to facilitate their transition by repealing Section 505 of the 1996 immigration reform so that states could use residency requirement in order to determine tuition levels. The bill also planned “to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain alien college-bound students who are long-term United States

residents.” Therefore, from the very first bill which was introduced in Congress on this subject, the policy sought to favor young immigrants, college students and long-term residents. Almost ten years later, the DREAM Act bill of 2010 (S.3992, 2010) showed that the target population of this immigration policy had not changed. The bill then proposed the “adjustment of status of certain alien students who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children”. With this bill, there was a renewed insistence on presenting recipients as individuals having come to the United State as children, which implies that someone else brought them here. This reinforces the idea that recipients are innocent children who have come to the United States “through no fault of their own”, and important step in presenting them as more deserving than others. Finally, in June 2012, the President of the United States led a press conference during which he introduced Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which grants a renewable two-year stay of deportation to certain undocumented youths. The president described future policy recipients in terms that insisted on traditional assimilation measures and the deservedness of the group: “These are young people who study in our schools, they play in our neighborhoods, they’re friends with our kids. [...] They were brought to this country by their parents” (Office of the Press Secretary, 2012). He further described them as Americans, in every way but on paper. Thus the narrative surrounding these policies presents recipients as clearly distinct from other undocumented immigrants: they are young, well assimilated, they go to college and stay out of trouble.

Other policies which allow for an adjustment of status were understood by recipients as requiring similar characteristics and behaviors. For example, at the time of her interview, Cecilia (NY) was trying to adjust her status under the Juvenile Act. She insisted on the fact that the applicant bears the burden of proving that they deserve this opportunity: “you need to have good reasons as to why you deserve to stay in the country. And you need to show, like the

Dream act, that you are a college student, and [...] that you might contribute to the country. If they see that you are not going to contribute to the country, you don't qualify for that." Hence the requirements contained in policies and bills encourage the perception of future recipients as following certain characteristics, but also place most of the responsibility of obtaining residency on the recipients themselves. Based on these requirements, they have to prove that they match the ideal created by the policy.

Once the requirements are created, the features of the "ideal" recipients are taken up by other actors in the policy subsystem, such as politicians, bureaucrats, activists, and opponents. This is illustrated by comments from undocumented youths themselves, such as Dora (NY), who commented on the role of the media: "When it comes to what I see in the news, most of them are Dreamers. [...]. Everything that comes up in the news is Dreamers, Dreamers, Dreamers. [...] That's why I'm telling you if there is anyone that needs priority when it comes to immigration reform, it has to be the Dreamers. [...] Because they're young, they have a future ahead of themselves." The media tends to center on one group among all undocumented immigrants who could benefit from a comprehensive reform, which reinforces the claims made by this group. Even among undocumented youths who favor granting a path to citizenship to most undocumented immigrants, students often take the priority. This was the case for Ofelia (NJ), who was very active in her high school Dream Team: "Every student gets in automatically. People who are ready have their DACA, they get in automatically. It's easier for them, and they already are struggling to get into college. [...] The pathway to citizenship would be about five years. [...] that would be fair." Based on the requirements of the original DREAM Act and DACA, even those who are familiar with the movement do not hesitate to establish a separation between the treatment of parents and their children. This results directly from the introduction and adoption of public policies which favored one group over the other.



*Emergence of the “perfect Dreamer” narrative*

Following the introduction of the DREAM Act bill in 2001, as well as of state-level “Dream Acts” regarding tuition policy, a very strong narrative has emerged in favor of this type of reform. The narrative focuses on undocumented students, who have overcome great barriers to gain access to college, who are well assimilated, and identify with the United States. This narrative however has flourished over the last ten years at the expense of other undocumented immigrants, namely those who are older or less educated.

The “perfect Dreamer” narrative is at the center of most mobilization efforts for immigration reform, whether at the federal level, or at the state level for tuition policy. This is well understood by those who are not involved in the movement but pay attention to changes in policy. For example, Ana (NY) explains that students should have the priority in immigration reform, and her explanation is a direct reflection of the content of the latest Dream Act bill: “I feel like what Obama wants to do, the reform for students who come here as children, they should have the first priority.” Here undocumented students should have the priority because they were children when they moved to the United States, and therefore were not responsible for violating U.S. immigration laws.

Other more active youths also use the image of high school and college students in order to get support from politicians. For example, Omar (NJ) is a founding member of the main New Jersey undocumented youth group, and he still participates in actions that emphasize the idea of the “perfect Dreamer”. In the winter of 2013, he participated in a rally and described it in the following manner: “We were trying to get the City Council to pass a resolution that supports in-state tuition for undocumented youth. And we got them to pass it unanimously [...]. We were having a little rally there. We had about 60 or 70 students, youths or other people. Some of

them were in their caps and gowns.” Activists clearly display some of the characteristics of these youths, such as the fact that they have graduated high school or college. By doing so, they hope to gain more support for these policies. Through this type of mobilization, undocumented students have in effect been separated from other undocumented immigrants. Some activists are aware of this difference, but highlight the efficacy of such a narrative, as Graciela (NJ) noted: “they have become kind of the sweethearts of the immigration movement. And we are still trying to get to that point when comes to the whole 11 millions. [...] It’s just a whole American dream thing, the whole school thing. It resonated with the public more.” Pursuing an education makes some undocumented youth fit in with the American Dream narrative of self-improvement and individual achievement.

Some activists, as will be shown below, understand the potential negative issues associated with such a policy image, but they present it as a necessary step in gaining access to the policy subsystem and having their voices heard. Many of them were originally encouraged to highlight their level of assimilation for example. This was the case for Patricia (NY), who started her college Dream Team: “Before, people would ask me, ‘do you consider yourself American?’ And I would say ‘yes, of course, I’m American all the way.’ And then I started realizing that I was sort of lying to myself and betraying myself and everything that I was.” Just like her, activists in New Jersey went through the same process and insisted on their Americanness and their high achievements. Andrea (NJ) for example spent years speaking up on behalf of undocumented youths, yet presenting a very specific image of the group. She explains the emergence of the “perfect Dreamer” narrative as a necessary response to the immigrant hysteria of the late 1990s and post-9/11 period: “you had to battle some of the most severe misconceptions and myths about “illegal” immigrants. [...] You had to almost convince your audience that you were not just an American, but that [...] you were so much more competent,

so much more attached to the identity of American in order to gain legitimacy. [...] and tied to that was, “I am an over achiever!” And the other part was, “but it was not my fault! I did not choose to come here!” So those were necessary in the early 2000’s up until the mid-2000’s, but once the movement started gaining ground really quickly in 2006 and 2007, that’s when that narrative started to become hurtful.” The first issue with the “perfect Dreamer” narrative is that it automatically excludes all those who do not meet the requirements for the Dream Act or DACA. It also divides the immigrant community between those who can benefit from these policies and those who cannot, and therefore weakens its mobilization potential.

As Andrea (NJ) noted above, the policy narrative surrounding the Dream Act became “hurtful” because it carried with it the potential for turning recipients away from their benefits. It also divided the immigrant community. For example, Roman (NY) dropped out of high school because he used to be in a gang, but he ultimately obtained a GED and now attends community college. He described his reaction upon hearing about DACA: “The first time I heard about it I actually didn’t pay attention, ‘I probably won’t qualify’.” When asked to explain why he thought this way, he mentioned his lack of educational achievement and past drug use. He only ended up applying after much insistence and coaxing on the part of his friends and family.

The educational component of the DREAM Act and DACA is also often misunderstood by those who implement these policies. This can have dire consequences for undocumented youths and their families as they may obtain limited or wrong information on the topic. Guadalupe (NY), who also dropped out of high school, explained why she ended up applying for DACA by herself instead of using an immigrant organization: “I applied by myself. I went to a lot of places, you know they told me they were places that would help you, but some of them told me “you’re not in school? You can’t get help.” So then I decided to pay for it, and I paid about

\$500 for [...] the lawyer.” Therefore, for undocumented youths who do not fit exactly in the “perfect Dreamer” model, it is very difficult to obtain services, but also to feel included among those who can legitimately make claims on Congress. Laura (NJ), an activist from New Jersey, took up the example of students who are still in the process of learning English, and who may be deemed not assimilated enough: “the way [they] would be looked at would be that they have not assimilated yet, they don’t speak the language, in their transition they’re not doing well in school, so sometimes people don’t even identify as Dreamers. [...] We can’t have those requirements. [...] for deferred action, you can’t have a misdemeanor, but what about those people who [...] into fights because of the people that they were around?” For her, the “perfect Dreamer” narrative is very unforgiving, and does not give undocumented youths the same second chances that residents or citizens would obtain. It can also further marginalize a group that is already excluded from most benefits.

Finally, beyond the divide created among undocumented youths, some lament the difference in treatment between “Dreamers” and older immigrants such as their parents. Miguel (NY): “when Mr. Obama goes on TV and says, ‘these Dreamers did not come through any fault of their own’, [...] it’s basically implying that somebody else is to blame. And it’s not him nor the government. It’s their parents. [...] Their moral standing is different. Their kids, you know, they could not help it. They all have good character, and they all have potential for genius, so they must all be okay.” Youths like Miguel resent the difference established between children and parents, which allows policymakers to assign benefits to some but not others, because the latter have been made to look less deserving of governmental action. The “perfect Dreamer” narrative is one that centers on issues of deservedness, and it must be understood in those terms. It is used by most undocumented youth, but those who are more active in the movement have started to distance themselves from using this type of rhetoric.

### **Deservedness in immigration reform**

The changes in immigration policymaking and enforcement following the 9/11 attacks were based on a change in the perception of immigration from a labor to a security issue. As a result, in order to obtain more accommodating policies from federal and state-level governments, it became necessary for advocates of immigration reform to challenge the conception of immigrants as a threat, and promote a more positive image of undocumented immigrants. This was done primarily in regards to young undocumented immigrants who had been educated in the U.S. system, spoke English well, and envisioned their future in the United States. The new discourse supporting the DREAM Act was one based on the concept of deservedness, and on the idea of an implicit contract between immigrant youths and the federal government. On the one hand undocumented youth would pursue their education or participate in the armed forces, abiding by a pre-established “perfect American” model, and in return the federal government would grant them a path to citizenship.

The central question then becomes: who is considered as “deserving” this grant of citizenship from the federal government? Another related and potentially devastating question is also: who is not considered deserving of governmental action? Based on the interviews for this project, it appears that approaches to comprehensive immigration reform and notions of deservedness among undocumented youths depend on these youths’ level of activism and length of involvement on the DREAM Act campaign. Those who are not active tend to relay often-heard descriptions of some undocumented youths as “DREAMers” who are deserving of federal action, whereas those who have been more active and have spent more time campaigning on behalf of the DREAM Act now feel the need to step back from this concept of deservedness toward a more inclusive model. Issues of identification with the DREAM Act

movement were mentioned in an earlier chapter on belonging, but they mostly concerned identification among undocumented youths from various backgrounds. Here, identification issues come to apply to other immigrant groups, such as parents, high school or college drop-outs, or immigrants who have committed crimes. This section presents the exclusive understanding of “deservedness” among non-activists, while the final section will present the new approach supported by long-term activists.

### *Deservedness among non-activists*

Among the non-activists interviewed for the project, immigration reform and a path to citizenship was most often understood as something that should be earned by immigrants living in the United States, rather than something owed to them by the government. A significant portion of the undocumented youths interviewed insisted on the idea that immigrants had to prove in various ways that they deserve the attention from the government. For those who were less active politically, or not active at all, deservedness in immigration reform was based on immigrant youths’ accomplishments in the United States, either through work or through school. This was reinforced for them by the messages they had heard surrounding the DREAM Act, either from politicians or from activists. Ana (NY) for example was not involved in any group or movement, but she firmly believed that education was one of the most important issues facing immigrants today. When asked to explain, she said: “in the news, there are so many who are like, top of the class, and once they graduate high school they can’t go anywhere, or they don’t accept you. [...] So it affects young kids a lot.” In her mind, a path to citizenship is only fair for these youths, because they have showed by their educational excellence that they deserve to be given a change.

This is a common narrative heard by proponents of the DREAM Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA). Hence when asked about what she thinks is a priority for immigration reform, her answer is unequivocally focused on students' rights: "I would put [in the reform] that they should give the same rights to students, even if they are not legally in the country, and allow them to get a good education. I feel like that's the main thing they should force every state to do." The narratives surrounding the DREAM Act and DACA were often repeated by those undocumented youths who were the least involved in the movement. These narratives focused almost exclusively on undocumented students, rather than on other immigrants including non-student youths or parents.

Even for those who had been marginally involved in prior years, the story of undocumented youths and their level of deservedness remained the same. For example, Lucia (NY) had been active several years before the interview, and had participated in demonstrations held in Washington, D.C. in support of the DREAM Act. Her experience with the movement then shows the type of message conveyed around the policy: "I went to Washington [...] for the DREAM Act. [...] They were dressed as students graduating, with the gowns and everything". It appears that what undocumented youths learn from these types of activities and actions put on by activists is that immigration reform primarily revolves around high achieving students. This conveys the message that in order to get the attention of the government, one needs to fit in with this model of the "deserving" undocumented immigrant. As a result, this message is internalized by young undocumented immigrants, who are then inclined to believe that government will only help those who achieve highly. When asked about comprehensive immigration reform and what her priority would be, Lucia's (NY) answer reflected this phenomenon: "We need to show that we are better, that we deserve to be helped, that we are not going to take people's jobs. [...] We have to be able to share, or at least compete with

everybody, because we work hard too.” Once again, her comments indicate that a path to citizenship is something that is earned by immigrants, who have to prove themselves to the government before making demands. When asked if immigration reform should include a path to citizenship for *all* undocumented immigrants, she pauses: “I think it has to be a process.” This final comment refers to something that was heard often from non-active respondents: not only does a path to citizenship have to be earned, but there is a possibility that other undocumented immigrants will be treated differently than students.

Most of the respondents in the project believed that undocumented students tend to be perceived more favorably by the American public than other undocumented immigrants. As Sandro (NY) described, this is due to the fact that they are seen as contributing to society: “if we’re in school, and we are illegal, [Americans] actually have a better opinion of them because [... they] just want to do better in life. And you’re going to give them props or whatever, because they basically have everything against them, and they’re still standing there, you know, ‘I want to be someone. I am somebody here, not just a shadow in the streets right now’.” Once again, undocumented students are presented as more deserving because they face many obstacles, yet manage to overcome them and attend college, while others seemingly choose to remain “in the shadows”. These “others” who are not in college have to find other ways to prove that they deserve the attention of the government. If no effort is made on their part, there is no reason why the government would spend time and resources on granting them citizenship. Older undocumented immigrants for example will have to prove that they deserve their residency or citizenship, most likely by having to wait longer, paying their taxes, or even paying a fine to atone for their undocumented status.

The latter solution was presented by several respondents, including Claudia (NJ), even though she was one of the founding members of the main New Jersey undocumented youth



group. She is no longer involved in the movement and is herself in the process of obtaining citizenship through her marriage to a U.S. citizen: “I just know that I want [the reform] to be fair. I want people to pay fines because [...] there has to be some way to show others that we apologize for being here, and coming the way we came. But we’re here, and we want to contribute, and we have been.” Her justification for the fines combines the idea that some undocumented immigrants have proved that they deserve a path to citizenship by “contributing”, but that nevertheless the group as a whole must make amends to the U.S. government for being undocumented.

Another way for undocumented immigrants to show that they deserve to be treated well is by clearly indicating that they have chosen the United States as their main country of residency, unlike seasonal laborers who come and go between the U.S. and their country of origin. This was expressed by Jesus (NJ), who is also not involved in the undocumented student movement: “Anyone that has been here for 5 or more years, you can stay because you have already made this your home. [...] But if you go back and forth, I think there should be [...] a year-long wait [...]. If you’ve gone back and come back, it kind of shows that you have lost faith in the system.” In his view, spending more time in the United States is proof that you are attached to the country, and that you will contribute toward its welfare. Therefore there are many ways for undocumented immigrants to show that they deserve to obtain residency or citizenship. Undocumented students can prove it just by being who they are, college students. However for others, there needs to be an additional step to help demonstrate your connection to the United States.

Most undocumented youths used a rhetoric based on the concept “fairness” when talking about immigration reform. However, for non-activists, being “fair” was understood as being fair to the United States and American citizens rather than to undocumented immigrants. It also

meant placing the burden of justification for immigration reform on potential recipients themselves rather than on the government. For example, Adrian (NY) used this type of rhetoric to justify the opposition to comprehensive immigration reform: “I’m still debating whether it’s really great to do [...] the whole immigration thing. I don’t know what I could change in it. You can’t just tell people [...] to accept something from one day to the other. [...] some people are trying to be part of the community, [...] but some people are just not right. You know, like people who commit crimes, people that do bad things.” As this quote shows, most non-activists presented students as generally more deserving by comparing them to other immigrants. These other groups were often “undeserving”, criminal immigrants, but they could also include those who had not finished high school, did not do well in school, or even parents. Using the same narrative that permeated the debate around the DREAM Act since its introduction in 2001, students were often presented as those immigrants that should get priority in gaining some status from the government.

For many of the non-activists, students had already proved that they deserved governmental action just by having managed to go to college. Other undocumented immigrants therefore, regardless of their age group, had to have something that would show their worth for the United States. The distinction between students and others was clearly explained by Alvaro (NJ). He had been involved for a while in his community college’s Dream Team, but at the time of the interview he could no longer spend time on mobilization because he was in the process of transferring to a four-year college. He explained how undocumented immigrants could prove themselves to the U.S. government: “I think that it’s smart to do what they did, [...] giving you a work permit, so you can work first. [...] And then if you prove that you’re not going to fall into any criminal activity, then sure, [in] four years, they should be given their residency. But someone like a student, who needs the financial aid, who needs the state aid,

[...] someone like myself who's already a DACA recipient, give it to them in less than a year.” Here the distinction between students and other undocumented immigrants is clear, and one additional difference is added: undocumented students should have priority because, as students, they need state aid to complete their education.

In this perspective students are doubly more deserving than others, because they should obtain residency and financial aid in college. Of course, the fact that respondents were all college-age means that they will in general be focused on the needs of their age group compared to others. Yet those who were not or less active with the Dreamers' movement tended to present students as generally more deserving than other undocumented immigrants of governmental action.

*Being in the U.S. “through no fault of their own”*

As indicated above, some respondents presented undocumented students as those immigrants who were most likely to receive positive attention from the U.S. Congress. There are two main reasons which are used to justify this difference in treatment. The first one is that undocumented students are presented as having moved to the United States because their parents had decided to move, but they themselves had no choice in the matter. As a result, they should not be considered responsible for their undocumented status. This separates them clearly from their parents. The second reason is that undocumented students are clearly trying to improve their lives and contribute by pursuing an education, no matter what barriers they face. Consequently, they should be perceived positively based on their work ethics, and in that sense they tend to separate themselves from other immigrants by making them appear less driven or successful.

First, undocumented youths who are not involved in any movement tend to stress the fact that they have come to the U.S. “through no fault of their own”. This narrative has been repeated multiple times since the DREAM Act was introduced, and was even used by President Obama in his press conference announcing the implementation of DACA (Office of the Press Secretary, 2012). Additionally, being a student is understood by several respondents as providing some sort of security from those who oppose the rights of undocumented immigrants. This is why some respondents explained that they felt comfortable sharing their status with others, especially in a school-related context. The idea that they were not the ones who made the decision to move to the U.S. was central to the narrative of some undocumented youths. Dario (NY) for example explained that this is why he shared his undocumented status with some of his high school teachers: “since I was under 18 and a student, technically I was not doing anything wrong to my knowledge.” Being a student and being young somehow sets you apart from other undocumented immigrants, and makes you less likely to encounter tough criticism for living in the United States. As Ana (NY) explained, having come at a young age somehow lifts the responsibility for violating U.S. immigration law: “[my friends] knew in high school, [...] but they did not judge me or anything. Because it wasn’t my fault that I came here.” This is a frequent argument used by undocumented youth to demonstrate that they belong in the United States, and to counter the arguments used by anti-immigrant activists. For example, Joel (NY) related an argument that he got into with one of his college roommates, while attending an institution that he described as conservative: “we got in a conversation like that, and at that point my roommate was very conservative [...] Like, “you’re supposed to obey the law of the land,” but I didn’t have a choice to come here!” Being undocumented is therefore often represented as something negative, which undocumented youth can escape by blaming others.

This rhetoric can also help undocumented youth in making claims on the U.S. government, since having come as a child means that you can identify with the United States more than with your country of origin. For Ernesto (NJ), the two are related in the sense that undocumented youth are actually forced to make a choice and become American: “we want to have all the rights and all the freedoms that other American citizens have. [...] we’ve been here for so long... I did not even have a choice in coming here, I was brought here!” With this rhetoric, undocumented youth seek to remind their audience of the challenges they face not only in school, but also of their inability to control circumstances. In effect, they are the passive recipients of other people’s choices – whether their parents or lawmakers.

This type of rhetoric is actually heard even among those who are more active in the Dreamers’ movement. For example, Alicia (NY) is a founding member of her college’s Dream Team, and she has encouraged many to tell their life stories. When she described her high school experience, she explained what made her open up about her status to her college advisor: “I had to be honest with her, you know. It’s something I cannot hide. And I can’t be ashamed, because I was eight years old, I did not take the decision to come to this country.” Her explanation touches on an aspect of undocumented youths’ lives – the shame of being out of status – that paralyzes many of them and prevents them from opening up to others. However for Alicia, the shame can be lifted by the understanding that one is not responsible for one’s undocumented status. This approach was echoed by Sara, a recent New Jersey activist, who explained that this particular characteristic of undocumented youth should be a reason why the U.S. Congress should give them priority. When asked what she would add to the immigration reform bill, she said: “I would include tuition equity. I would give students priority [...]. Like everyone else has said, these children did not really make the decision to be in the positions that there are in today.”

Essentially, these activists are making an argument that is similar to the one made by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision. The Justices at the time decided that children should not be denied access to public education based on the actions of their parents. By focusing on their status as children at the time when they came to the United States, some activists hope that they can gather support for the DREAM Act or tuition bills at the state level. Alba, a recent activist in New Jersey, noticed the change in attitude among opponents once the situation of undocumented youth is explained from this perspective. Once they are presented as children, those who oppose the policy are more likely to change their minds: “Based on my experience, there’s less the idea that we should go back, because it was not our fault, [...]. But I think that some of those who believe that, they do agree with us, that it was not our fault. So they accept the education that we were provided for.” In effect, by using this rhetoric, undocumented youths hope to present themselves as victims of circumstances rather than as the perpetrators of a crime against immigration law. Nevertheless, as we will see below, several of the activists interviewed have actually become much more cautious today in making claims on Congress based on how they arrived in the United States, and on their lack of input toward the decision to move there. As they explained, by presenting themselves as the victims of other people’s choices, they are essentially casting the blame on their parents, and therefore excluding their own family members from the group of “deserving” immigrants.

Finally, the narrative is so entrenched in the minds of undocumented youths that even those who are disadvantaged by it agree that it should prevail. For example, Jose (NY) arrived to the U.S. when he was 14, and he himself agrees that there is a difference between him and the Dreamers in the sense that they deserve more from the government than he does. This is particularly due to the fact that he knew that he was coming to the U.S., even though he did not know how, and they did not. According to him, this justifies the different perception that people

may have of undocumented students: “When you come to this country illegally, you know you’re breaking the law, right? But there’s a difference. I came to this country not knowing that I was doing that. I came to this country, yeah I knew that I was coming here, but I just came here. [...] And there’s a difference, right? Sometimes you come at the age of 2, 5, 10, people know that it’s not your choice, you’re just following your parents. You’re just following them. They tell you to come, you have no option, you’re coming.” Based on this perspective, undocumented students are often presented as more deserving of governmental action because they should not be considered responsible for the situation they are in, and for the violation of U.S. immigration law. This rhetoric has severe consequences for other undocumented immigrants, particularly the parents of undocumented students, who then become those who are less worthy of the attention of government.

### *Striving to improve oneself and others*

The second reason advanced by some undocumented youth which allowed them to be considered as “deserving” immigrants was that they had worked over the years to improve themselves, either by learning English, doing well in school, or participating in community activities. This is why for many respondents the priority in immigration reform should be to allow students to pursue their education. According to Santiago (NY), immigration reform should be a means to reward those who have made an effort toward the traditional measures of assimilation: “I mean, people should be more involved into getting educated. There’s a lot of people who just came here, [...] they just come to work, and that’s it. There’s nothing besides work. [...] there’s not a lot of people who force themselves to learn English or to go to school.” He also believes that education should be a requirement in order to obtain permanent status in

the U.S., which shows that labor market opportunities do not seem to be enough of a reason to migrate.

Pursuing an education was presented by several respondents as a way to counteract the stereotypes surrounding undocumented immigrant, even if that meant relying on these stereotypes to create distance between themselves and other immigrant groups. For Adrian (NY), the negative public perception of immigrants can be transformed if undocumented youths take it upon themselves to prove that they are more than “just” migrant workers: “Unless [...] the younger immigrants start doing better and demonstrate that we can do better than just any low working-class person, they’ll change their views. But other than that we are always going to be marked or portrayed as just lower working class.” Once again, the responsibility for obtaining residency and changing a possibly negative public image lies with immigrants themselves.

By pushing for these standards, these respondents created an implicit divide among undocumented immigrants, between those who are obtaining an education, and those who are not – or cannot. Guadalupe (NY) dropped out of high school, got married and now has a four-year old. She recently obtained her GED and was applying for college at the time of her interview. This allowed her to present her situation as completely different from other immigrants: “I think that’s a good way to demonstrate to the government how good you are doing, and how you can bring something here. Most of the people that you see, not just Mexicans but other Hispanics, in the street asking for work, and you see other people, Americans or whatever, asking for money. [...] we can bring something, we’re not asking you to give us something for free.”

Education then becomes the key element for proving that one deserves positive action from the government, compared to other immigrant groups who may then appear as less deserving.



Most undocumented youths were aware of the possible difference in public perception of undocumented students compared to other immigrants, and those who did attributed this difference to their educational endeavors. Ernesto (NJ) explained his understanding of public attitude toward undocumented immigrants: “I guess for the public the student group has a certain advantage, because since we are trying to study and better ourselves, that kind of gives us a better image [...]. We don’t really have that negative image that any other immigrant might have, because we are actually trying to improve our lives.” Because of this difference, the original supporters of the DREAM Act have heavily relied on this image of undocumented youth as striving to improve themselves, and as unfairly treated by the law. This narrative has been picked up by politicians and by the media, and has flooded the immigration reform debate of the early 2010s.

The narrative surrounding the DREAM Act has been internalized by most undocumented youths, who may not realize the consequences of this narrative for their families, especially their parents. In the words of Alvaro (NJ), there appear to be a justification for the difference in treatment between him and his mother: “I understand when they write [a reform], and they have emphasis on the students only [...]. And why they would not want someone like my mom to stay in the country, who did not get educated in the US, her English is not that strong either. So I might understand why.” Thus assimilation measures, such as command of English and educational attainment, can be used by immigrants themselves to create distance from other groups and justify their claims on Congress.

This approach was echoed by several other respondents, such as Enrique (NJ), who also admitted that this could have negative consequences for these other immigrants: “I think that students appear as people want to get a better life, as people who contribute to the community [...]. A student looks like somebody who wants to [...] be somebody. [...] It probably would

make some people look bad, but that is how society is.” From this perspective, using common stereotypes against some undocumented immigrants is justified in a fatalistic manner. Studies have shown that it is common for some immigrants to want to separate themselves from groups in the host country who are perceived negatively by the general public (Zhou and Xiong, 2005). Here undocumented youths use often-heard stereotypes in order to present themselves as more desirable immigrants than other older and less educated immigrants. The measures of deservedness used by undocumented youths include education, language, time spent in the United States continuously, but also attempts at naturalization. For example, Pablo (NJ) insisted on the latter as a proof that immigrants are truly making their home in the United States: “it’s difficult to say [we’re] going to [...] make everyone a legal resident [...]. Because some people are really not well assimilated into the country, or they have no desire to be assimilated into the country. [... M]y mom knows this lady who has been here years, and she [...] made no effort to become a citizen despite being here for more than 10 years or something.” Therefore the efforts made by immigrants to show that they deserve to be treated in a positive manner need to be constant over time, at least based on the immigration reform narrative of undocumented youths.

Finally, there is one additional way through which undocumented immigrants can prove their worth. It is by being engaged and providing services to their community. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, civic engagement and political participation create a stake for undocumented youth in their place of residence, so it is not surprising that they would apply the same standard to other immigrant groups. According to Carla (NJ), undocumented youths need to voice their concerns so as to be perceived as “active” by the government, and therefore perceived positively: “if you just stay home sitting down and doing nothing, they’re not going to see any desire at all. And if they see that we go out there and look for help, [...] they’re going to say

‘okay, these people are yearning for something.’ And you know, they might give it to us.” Her account of the relationship between undocumented youths and government places little responsibility on the latter, but attaches a large role to civic engagement.

This was also the case for Hugo (NJ), who was saddened by the lack of engagement among older immigrants like his mother: “I was telling [my mom], we need to get the community involved [for the reform]. And my mom was like [...] ‘I won’t do that’. The majority of the people are like that. [...] They’re just waiting for somebody else to do the job and they get the benefit.” Even if in his interview he did not explicitly bar non-active immigrants from the benefits of the reform, he still managed to create a difference in levels of deservedness between those who become engaged to support the reform and those who do not. In none of these accounts was there an explanation for why older, less educated immigrants may not have the time or the skills to become better English speakers or more civically engaged. In New York, Gael shared a similar point of view, and insisted that immigrants needed to take it upon themselves to change the public’s negative perception of the group: “by becoming elected officials, by becoming honest men, by becoming successful [...]. We can own houses, we can have an honest life and not live in the shadows. [...] it’ll show that there’s more to these people than painting houses or mowing the lawn.” By promoting the narrative of the “perfect Dreamer”, undocumented youths who are less involved with the movement tend to establish a distance between themselves and other immigrants. This is potentially dangerous for these other groups, who may become more easily excludable from reform policies.

### *Setting themselves apart from residents and American citizens*

The narrative of deservedness put forward by undocumented youths established distance from other undocumented immigrants, but also from permanent residents and citizens. Many

respondents presented themselves as more driven due to the challenges related to their immigration status. The contrast between their motivation and the legal limitations imposed by statutes increased their sense of injustice, and ultimately their desirability as immigrants. They tended to present others who felt “safe” due to their status as less driven, and sometimes as taking advantage of the government.

Most of the comments directed at citizens and residents took place during discussions of educational experience and achievements. This is related to the fact that the first and main experience of undocumented youths in being treated differently than their peers by the law often occurred in high school or in college, or during the transition between the two. Comparisons between their experiences and those of others lead them to assess the performance of their peers compared to their own. This was the case for two community college students in New Jersey, Alejandra and Marta, who insisted on the sense of injustice derived from a difference in treatment. Alejandra (NJ) explained how she felt in high school: “My senior year, when I applied to colleges, it was tough to see that people that... I’m not going to say, who were not doing as well as I was, they would get full rides, and I would be like, ‘oh, why do they get full rides? Why do they get to be part of this program with all this financial aid while I am here struggling to get half a scholarship or anything?’” From her perspective, other students’ status as citizens or residents allowed them to get a better education even though they did not perform as well as she did.

While discussing this topic, Marta (NJ) presented her experience in a similar way, and places the blame on laws which treat students differently based on status: “I think that the government [has to] recognize that they are being unfair. [...] Sometimes, American students or residents students, they don’t work as hard and they are able to go to college. And some of us, because we are illegal we work twice as hard, but then we get worse.” The distance from

citizens and residents allows undocumented youths to make claims on Congress and state legislature based on concepts of justice, fairness, and individuality, which resonate largely with American political culture. This distance also helps them consolidate the gains they have made when individual colleges offer them some type of support. For example, Inez (NJ) is attending a county college in New Jersey which waives her tuition regardless of her status: “I think [the school administrators] actually perceive us differently, [...] they perceive us in a sense as being [...] more determined to overcome barriers and our own circumstances. We are more driven because of our circumstances.” Thus in this narrative one’s undocumented status in college becomes a sign that students are more driven, and therefore more deserving of aid than others.

This is reinforced by a comparison with American citizens, but also with immigrants who have obtained permanent resident status, and therefore may have lost the drive they used to have. Several undocumented respondents mentioned the change in their friends or family members because they had obtained their papers. Some like Cecilia (NY) went as far as describing their lack of status as a benefit, except in the school context, because it prevents them from relying too much on others or on the government. She related her experience: “[my mother] says, “don’t let the papers get to your head!” [...] I have seen a lot of people who have gotten their papers, and [...] they go from hard workers to being lazy. I have a family member, who started to think that way, and now she has the idea of ‘Obama is going to take care of me.’ Food stamps and welfare. It bothers me, the mentality.” Undocumented youths do not hesitate to use the same rhetoric that is often used by anti-immigrant activists, centering on concepts of justice, fairness, and individual responsibility, in order to prove their desirability as immigrants. In order to do so, they establish distance between themselves and undocumented immigrants, but also with residents and citizens.

## **Toward a more inclusive narrative**

### *Deservedness among activists*

Those who were more active in the Dreamers' movement, whether at the federal or state level, were not as focused on students and less likely to present themselves as a more deserving group compared to others. Instead, they insisted on creating a comprehensive measure of deservedness, which would go beyond traditional measures of assimilation, and include other accomplishments, especially those of parents having taken a risk in moving to the United States. For example, Silvia (NY) lamented the different treatment of immigrant parents in the public narrative on immigration: "in people's minds, if they hear undocumented students, they will think, 'oh well, these are kids that were brought at a very young age!' But if they see undocumented immigrants, they're like, 'oh well, how long had they been here?' [...] for undocumented immigrants, it's more [...] of a 20 questions kind of thing: 'how did they come? Do they work? Did they commit any felonies?' [...] So it's a completely different viewpoint of what an undocumented immigrant is, or what an undocumented student is." Here the difference is clearly understood, but she is not using it to present herself as a more desirable immigrant, or to advance her own claims on Congress.

Several of the respondents used their own parents as examples of immigrants who are just as deserving of immigration reform as undocumented students. This was the case for Juan (NY), who also noticed the way that undocumented students are treated by the media and public officials: "the President also is more open to Dreamers [...] but I think it should be fair for everyone [...], not just Dreamers. I think our parents were the first Dreamers, [...] so they should be the first ones to get their residency." From his perspective, the accomplishments of older, less educated immigrants should be valued just as highly as those of students, by taking into consideration the risks that parents took. Those risks are well understood by activists,

especially those whose family has had to deal with immigration officials or the courts. This was the case for Rosario (NY), who started her college's Dream Team: "I would just give amnesty to everybody. [...] just because you don't know the language, you shouldn't be excluded. Like my parents don't know the language as well, [...] and it's going to piss me off if they pass a bill and they can't get it because they don't know the language, or because, you know, my father was deported over... Maybe 15 years ago. [...] I mean, it's not fair, he's been working for more than 20 years."

Those who are more involved in the movement seem to be more aware of the potential effects of a reform that would focus exclusively on students. In that sense, the same concepts of fairness and justice are brought up, but in an inclusionary manner which applies to parents as well. These activists take their distances from the more prevalent narrative associated with immigration reform, and tend to question the priorities which others put forward. As Giuliana (NJ) explains, this narrative seems to place more emphasis on the individual goal of self-improvement than on a more collective goal of taking care of one's family and child-rearing. She disagrees with this type of priority: "undocumented students are [...] easier to accept [...] as opposed to [...] somebody who is an adult and just came here. Which I don't really understand, because they came here because of family needs, which to me somehow seems more important than an education [...] My parents are more deserving." For some activists in the Dreamers' movement, the lines created between deserving and undeserving undocumented immigrants are detrimental to parents, and create a false sense of what is fair and what the priority for all immigrants should be. Those who have been the most active are now trying to take a step back from the "perfect Dreamer" narrative so as to be able to promote more inclusionary policies.

*Campaign strategies in New York and New Jersey*

In spite of the understanding by many activists of the dangers of relying on the “perfect Dreamer” narrative, most of the campaign actions put up by undocumented youth rely on life stories, and center on the challenges faced by individuals. It is crucial to investigate the various strategy choices made during the 2013 campaigns in New York and New Jersey to understand who is encouraged and recruited to participate in these events, as well as what narratives they tend to feature the most.

Based on field observation and participation-observation during these two campaigns, life stories are the essential piece of any presentation by undocumented youth-led groups. This was the case during a Constitution Day event held at Rutgers University in Newark, NJ, during which time students told stories about paying out-of-state tuition in the state. Personal stories were also the first and last panel of the “Undocumented and Unafraid” event held at the Murphy Institute in New York, along with the sale of a book including more life stories, and the showing a short documentary about the life of Tam Tran, an early leader in the movement. Other events held throughout the year at Macaulay Honors College (CUNY) and at New York University also relied on undocumented youths telling their stories, which often include how they found out about their status, how they opened up about it to their friends or teachers, and how they transitioned to college. In general, all of the first events organized by newly created Dream Teams include life stories by students about their personal struggles. This was the case in 2012-2013 for the teams created at New York University, Essex County College, and Passaic County Community College in New Jersey. Some of them considered multiplying the effects of these lives stories by creating videos that would be later posted on social media such as Facebook pages and YouTube channels. During the “Day of Action” organized by the NYSYLC in Albany in order to lobby for the New York DREAM Act, participants shared their



life stories with New York state representatives, or most likely with their aides. However what the elected officials seemed to be the most interested in was whether the leadership supported the introduced legislation.

Most of the life stories shared during these events relied on the same narrative centering on the unfairness of the treatment of undocumented youths in the transfer from high school to college. For the event held in Albany, organizers had included high school students among the presenters who expressed concerns about their future after high school, and its effect on their educational performance. Several of the long-term activists insisted on the necessity of using such personal stories. For example, Patricia (NY), who was a team leader during the Albany event, described the force of this strategy: “Our stories have humanized the immigration debate [...]. I feel like people do see that there is a human side to it, that people are being affected by the policies. It’s put a face to the issue. [...] It’s more like, ‘I am an undocumented immigrant, and these are my issues, this is what I’m going through, and this is what my community is going through as well.’” Life stories have allowed undocumented youth to regain some degree of control over the debate on immigration. It has empowered those who shared their story, as well as those who listen to them. These stories have given a face to the debate on the rights and benefits granted to immigrant youth, and they have constituted a powerful argument in favor of access to college. Omar (NJ) explained that these stories have been useful in combating traditional stereotypes: “when people think of immigrants, they usually picture an agricultural worker out in the fields, picking crops or something. [The Dreamers] challenge that notion [...]. They, or I guess we, are giving a face to it, and we tell our stories and we humanize it. We’re just like, we’re just like you, Americans.” Through these life stories, undocumented youths are able to tell their stories from their own perspective, and give detailed accounts of the

direct consequences of immigration laws. This strategy has worked well for undocumented youth, and these stories have become a staple of the narrative surrounding the Dream Act.

In addition, the life stories narratives and the humanization of undocumented immigrants through them has helped push the goal immigration reform. Omar (NJ) acknowledges their force in the national debate: “we could not have had such a big movement a couple of years ago, because the narrative had not changed yet. Everything was still ‘illegal, illegal, illegal’. But now, because of this big dreamer movement, people [...] feel like they can join the cause [...]. The narrative has changed to being immigrants sympathetic.” The use of life stories was originally used at the national level, but as the federal Dream Act faltered in Congress and more states adopted tuition policies, the same strategy was pursued at different levels of government. This was the case for the coalition pursuing the New Jersey Tuition Equity bill in 2013, which was ultimately adopted at the end of the year. At a coalition meeting in July 2013, one of the strategies being discussed included the creation of “Public Relations” team in charge of obtaining favorable editorials written by well-known supporters like University Presidents throughout the state. The goal of this strategy was to use the media and control the narrative surrounding the policy, making sure that it promoted a positive view of the potential recipients of the bill.

The use of life stories allows for the possible creation of a relationship between story teller and audience. Several undocumented activists admitted that they intended to use the vulnerability of undocumented youths in order to play on feelings of guilt on the part of the audience. At a New Jersey college Dream Team held in July 2013, one member encouraged new recruits to share their stories at an event they were planning: “The most compelling stories are the ones that are told [...] Make them feel like shit!” Therefore the vulnerability of

undocumented youths plays a central role in life stories. Most of the time, this vulnerability is simply related through a story, but some activists do not hesitate to put it directly on display.

During another New Jersey coalition meeting in August 2013, a U.S.-born activist led a discussion of events and actions which could lead to arrests, such as the occupation of a candidate's campaign headquarters. After several people volunteered, one person present commented that maybe "not all those who face arrest should be Mexican", but her comment was ignored. When given a chance to explain herself, she said that she did not want to perpetuate the stereotype that all undocumented immigrants are from Mexico. Nevertheless, the leader of the discussion ignored her concerns, and bluntly explained that "it would help with messaging if several of the youths arrested [were] undocumented." The discussion further included a plan to talk to lawyers to understand the degree of protection afforded by DACA and to gather bail money, as if this was definitely part of the strategy for the group. Therefore life stories may represent a more passive and safe way to describe the vulnerability and injustices experienced by undocumented youths, but other activists can display them more openly as a means to attract the attention of the public.

In effect, personal stories help focus some of the key elements of the narrative surrounding the Dream Act and immigration reform. However, because of their format they also highlight the experiences of undocumented immigrants as individuals, and most often as high achieving high school or college students. Therefore they still rely on the traditional image of undocumented youths as students. For example, at a New Jersey strategy meeting in September 2013, activists planned an event to be held at one of the governor's campaign headquarters. The event included holding up a "mock classroom" outside of the campaign headquarter, where the press would be invited. The classroom would provide the opportunity to teach them and the public about immigration myths, with one of the members of a local Dream Team appointed as

the teacher. Even though some activists understand the need for inclusion, the narratives promoted by most state and federal coalitions therefore still rely heavily on the image of undocumented youths as students as well as their ability to be leaders and high achievers.

*Creating a more inclusive policy narrative*

The “perfect Dreamer” narrative has the potential to reduce the number of beneficiaries of immigration reform, to marginalize other undocumented youths, and to harm the recruitment efforts of the movement. Long-term activists are starting to understand the need to switch this narrative for a more inclusive discourse in order to serve the entire immigrant community and help with the recruitment of other undocumented youths who may otherwise feel alienated. Several groups were mentioned in the interviews as potential beneficiaries of a more cautious approach, namely non-Hispanic immigrants, high school and college drop-outs, and older immigrants.

One of the early steps in changing the narrative surrounding immigration reform is to include in the movement undocumented youths who do not often get portrayed in the media, such as non-Hispanic immigrants. At a “Coming out of the Shadows” event in Union Square in New York City held in March 2013, efforts made by the NYSYLC to promote the existence of an Asian group of undocumented youths called Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East coast (RAISE). At the same events, participants held signs about women’s rights, and speakers included a Jewish undocumented immigrant from Israel speaking about his experience. This was a contrast from an event organized by the same organization in Albany a few weeks earlier, where most of the speakers had been Hispanic, and had even addressed the crowd in Spanish, which had annoyed the non-Spanish speaking participants. At the later event, the organization also promoted Dream Teams from all over New York City, including Staten

Island, thus giving a larger geographical identity to the movement. Older immigrants' voices were also heard at the event, when the mother of one of the activists spoke about the plight of undocumented parents, specifically single mothers trying to do what's best for their children. As time goes by, events tend to become more inclusive, and participants offer a more diverse image of the undocumented immigrant population. The same technique was used by youth groups in New Jersey. Even though the first event from the Essex County College Dream Team relied mostly on the life stories of three college students, efforts of diversification were made by having speakers who were from Brazil, Jamaica, along with the Dominican Republic and Mexico. As was mentioned by several activists, having a more diverse body of activists helps the creation and maintenance of contacts with local elected officials, by making access to in-state tuition an immigrant rather than a single-community, "Hispanic" issue.

The second step toward the promotion of inclusiveness is making sure that undocumented youths who may not have done as well in school can also participate in the movement. As mentioned by Laura (NJ), the main change in the discourse needs to happen when discussing immigration reform and addressing other youths. However, she explained that this is not always easy to do, as the prevalence of the "perfect Dreamer" narrative has created a certain amount of expectation from audiences: "When I was giving one of my talks at a high school, my teacher told me to highlight my GPA and all these things. I did not want to do that because that puts me in a position where it's only the A students [...] that need help or assistance. And that's not true. Maybe [...] the reason that they're not doing well at school is because [...] they don't know what [they're] going to do in the future because of their stance." Carrying on with a more inclusive discourse can therefore create some pushback on the part of the audience, who is open to the stories of high achievers, and needs compelling elements to decide that someone is deserving of the reform.

Activists like Laura (NJ), however, have come to believe that they may be doing more harm than good by relying on, and therefore promoting, the “perfect Dreamer” narrative: “We exclude a lot of people from that with that framework. It kind of does what we were trying to avoid. We perpetuate that injustice. We just exclude them and that’s not fair. And then we complain that there’s not a lot of people showing their faces, but that’s because they don’t fall into that category of the perfect Dreamer.” She explains that she understands why a single mother or a high school drop-out would fail to identify with the movement as it is currently being represented, and would therefore prefer not to participate in any event or mobilization effort.

A similar point of view was expressed by Miguel (NY), who is only marginally involved with undocumented youth-led groups, and preferred to join an issue-based group such as an immigration law services organization. He explained that if youth-led organizations changed their narrative, it would help with their recruitment efforts because more youth might identify with them: “I have very ambivalent feelings towards these leaders sometimes, because it’s painting everyone as if [...] we’re all really virtuous people [...]. That just really pisses me off because I could go in a documentary and say, ‘I have 3 degrees, I was cum laude and I have all these things’. But what am I taking away? That I was addicted to some things, that I was in a gang, and all that stuff, that I am mad and I am angry. But people don’t want to hear that.” For him, leaders of the movement have to be very careful not to create impossibly high expectations with their narrative, since it could become yet another burden for most undocumented youths. As Andrea (NJ) noted, the “perfect Dreamer” narrative gives a false impression of the problems faced by undocumented students, which promotes the adoption of skewed public policies. The narrative is necessary, but needs to change: “[the public is] starting to perceive them more as human beings and the “Dreamers” movement has a lot to do with

that, with giving a new face and new voices to what an immigrant looks like. It sucks that in a way, unintentionally, they... We are driving forward an idea of a model immigrant. I really hate that.” Many like Andrea have understood the dangers related to this early narrative, and are now actively stepping away from it.

The very experience of these young leaders is an example of the transformation of the narrative throughout the years. The new narrative also corresponds to an effort on the part of activists to regain control over the image of undocumented youth, one that is closer to reality and that is not created by outsiders and politicians. Two activists from New York described the necessary distance they created between themselves and the early narrative. Patricia (NY) explained her transition from it to a more inclusive one: “when I first started, I was like, ‘I’m a great student, I’m an excellent student, I deserve this’ [...] You want to please the politicians, you want to please the people who are against you, [...] you want to give them a reason as to why [they] should support you. [...] So it’s not discrediting that, but it is sort of like how politicians have done that, maybe in a sense to put us against each other. It’s like, ‘well, I don’t have a 4.0 so maybe I don’t deserve the Dream Act’, right?”

For long-term activists, the “perfect Dreamer” narrative has emerged as something foreign which was not created by the movement itself but on the contrary used by policymakers to divide the community. The requirements of the DREAM Act at first, and later those in DACA, have been imposed by outsiders in order to decide who, within the undocumented community, should receive positive attention. Rosario (NY), another activist, now rejects this label created by those outside of the community: “I have stepped away from the word “Dreamer” because of the way they suppose the Dreamer to be, you know, ‘this poor child, such a great student who wants to do great things in life. [...]’. You know what I mean? I get it, they’re trying to sell it, and I appreciate it, but the way they do it is just annoying. And also that has put another title on

us, we're the Dreamers, which I'm not. I'm not a Dreamer, I'm undocumented." For Rosario and others, the "perfect Dreamer" narrative was helpful at first to try to steer the conversation away from security issues, but because it is not controlled by the community the values it promotes do not truly reflect the situation or the needs of the undocumented. Most importantly, these young activists intend to displace the burden created by the "perfect Dreamer" narrative from undocumented youths themselves onto the government. New arguments need to emerge, no longer centering on the deservedness of the policy recipients, but on the nature and society and the role of government. As these youths become more aware of the policies already in place and their effects on immigrants' lives, they are more likely to call on government to share some of the responsibility in bringing forward a more just society. As one Jamaican-born, formerly undocumented youth remarked while sharing her life story at an event: "I never thought to look to the state for help." She always believed in the narrative's fundamental concepts of individual responsibility and reward for her work ethic, yet she now understands the unfair burden placed on her shoulders as a teenager by such a policy narrative.

## **Conclusion**

The question remains of whether a new and more inclusive narrative will survive the multiple policies introduced in 2013 and 2014 regarding immigration reform and access to college for undocumented youths. Several policies have been introduced by the latest Congress and at the state level, and they each target different groups and provide different benefits. The Dream Act remains the same, focusing on college-bound undocumented youths. In addition, the Kids Act was introduced as its Republican version, in response to Comprehensive Immigration Reform, which would provide a path to citizenship to a much larger group of undocumented immigrants, including older, less qualified immigrants. Finally, the In-State for



Dreamers Act was introduced to guarantee access to in-state tuition for undocumented youths who fit the same criteria as listed in the DREAM Act.

During campaign strategy meetings in New York and New Jersey, debates took place among older and more recent activists about which policies they should support with the few resources they have. Because policymakers have introduced bills which target separate groups, and have managed to craft very specific policy images for each of these groups, it is not easy for undocumented youths to choose which bills they want to support. Undocumented youths who want to become more involved have to make a choice as to whose interests they will defend: their own, or that of the entire immigrant community. What this shows is that policy design has consequences on the type of individuals who will be mobilized around an issue, and on the forms of mobilization which activists will prefer.

During a discussion on this topic at a New Jersey strategy meeting in the summer of 2013, those who were more knowledgeable on the differences between these policies pushed for more advocacy of the state tuition bill. Omar (NJ) was quick to explain why more efforts should be made on the state rather than the federal bill: “We can’t wait for the federal level [...] The time is now.” At a later meeting, members admitted “being torn between the two”, that is to say pursuing a state-level tuition bill or comprehensive reform in the U.S. Congress. After leaders in the meeting explained that the federal reform would not fix the problem of tuition for undocumented youths, most other members agreed to focus primarily on the state bill. As a consequence, any attempt at comprehensive immigration reform in Congress needs to address the issue of state-level treatment of undocumented youths. A bill was recently introduced which would mandate states to provide in-state tuition to DACA recipients, which shows that some lawmakers have understood the need to address the priorities of undocumented youths.

Therefore even though efforts are being made by some activists to promote a more inclusive policy narrative on immigration reform, the mobilization of undocumented youths and other immigrants may still be shaped by the policies introduced at different levels of government and the benefits granted by these policies. As these policies create various levels of deservedness, and essentially pit certain immigrant groups against others, they jeopardize the chances for a vast immigration reform movement. The next chapter, which deals with the variation in the experiences of undocumented youths with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, illustrates the multiple challenges brought on by changes in federal policy.

## **Chapter 9: Undocumented Youth and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals**

In June 2012, the President of the United States announced the introduction of new discretionary measures entitled Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (D.A.C.A.). The program was intended to provide work permits and defer deportation procedures for undocumented youth who met certain criteria such as having entered the United States before turning 16, being enrolled in school or having graduated from high school, and not having a criminal record. Alternately, undocumented youths who had been discharged from the Coast Guards or the Armed Forces would also be considered. It was destined to alleviate the challenges met by undocumented youth after the failure by Congress to adopt the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act, most commonly known as the DREAM Act.

This chapter focuses on issues related to the design and implementation of this new policy affecting undocumented youth, and to the reception of this policy by the intended recipients and their families. The design of the new policy is analyzed from a dual perspective of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, focusing on its potential effect on the target population in terms of participation and belonging. The chapter also presents the implementation of D.A.C.A. from both a top-down and a bottom-up perspective, focusing on the political goals behind the policy and the criteria it establishes, but also on state and local-level actors involved in the process, including bureaucrats and immigrant advocacy groups. The interviews conducted showed a great variation in the experiences of undocumented youths in applying for deferred action, and in the quality of their interaction with immigration officials. Even though the policy

was presented by the administration as an inclusive measure, analyses from the interviews reveal experiences of exclusion on the part of undocumented youths and their families throughout the process of implementation. Additionally, interviews with undocumented activists showed some negative outlook toward the policy, which was considered divisive for the immigrant movement, and nurtured further disappointment with the government.

### **DACA eligibility issues**

#### *Lack of eligibility for the policy*

The sample for the interviews in this project was composed of Latino undocumented youths between the ages of 18 and 30 living in New York or in New Jersey. While most of them had applied for DACA, and were in the age group that had been targeted by the policy change, not everyone in the sample was actually eligible. The requirements for the policy included items such as having arrived in the United States before turning 16, which immediately disqualified several of the respondents. Another of the requirements for the policy was that had to show that they had been continually residing in the United States since June 15, 2007, that is to say exactly 5 years before the policy was introduced. This is a requirement which is similar to the one imposed on legal permanent residents who apply for naturalization. However, both of these requirements put together became a challenge for some of the respondents. For example, Enrique (NJ) researched the requirements on his own and realized that he would not be eligible for the policy: “I had to have entered the country before the age of 16, so I was a little late. [...] I looked up the requirements myself. I looked at certain pages. I read all the requirements and... It was not only that, but by the time they passed that, I was supposed to have had five years in the country, but I did not. I had only four.” He did not even contact a lawyer or any organization that provides legal services to immigrants because he did

not want to spend money on something that he could figure out on his own. For Santiago (NY), the problem was the same: “I tried to apply but I didn’t qualify because I got here after 16. And I didn’t have any proof of being here.” Hugo (NJ) had arrived in the United States before he turned 16, but just a couple of months after the June 15, 2007 deadline established by the government: “I could not. I did not meet all of the requirements. I had been living here for four years and eight months, and you really need five years. So I really needed four more months, and I cannot apply for it. It’s crazy, I know. So DACA did not really help me at all.” Hugo was familiar with the requirements because he had been involved with his community college’s Dream Team, which has run workshops on DACA eligibility and requirements. Most of the other members of the team were eligible and had applied, and he was the only member who was ineligible. The requirements for the policy thus created a new cleavage within the immigrant community, and this time even within the undocumented youth movement itself, between the recipients of the policy and those who did not meet all the requirements. The criteria established by the administration has the potential of disrupting the growing Dream Teams across the metropolitan area by alienating those youths who may be enrolled in the same program, or have fought for a policy change, but who may end up on the outside of the pool of potential recipients.

Some of the respondents who were less involved were also less knowledgeable about the policy and its components. This led them to make assumptions about their future in the United States based on a faulty understanding of the policy. For example, while talking with Cesar (NY), he explained that he moved to the United States when he was 17, which makes him ineligible for DACA. However his lack of knowledge of the policy leads him to believe that he is not eligible because he did not finish high school: “I was eligible for that but I don’t have the GED so... It’s what I need to have. [...] I was filing for it, and now it’s getting real because I

didn't finish school. So I was thinking, you know, what are you doing? You were fighting for something, and now you can't have it? You don't pay attention." For him, his lack of ineligibility has become a source of motivation to finish high school or obtain a GED, but because he has not consulted with a lawyer and he is not involved in the movement, he has not actually looked up all of the requirements imposed by the policy. However once again, the requirements imposed by the administration are keeping undocumented youths within the same age group outside of the group of recipients, further alienating them from society.

#### *Other choices besides DACA*

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was not the only solution presented to undocumented youths in order to gain status in the United States. Some youths were undocumented at the time of the interview, but were in the process of adjusting their status through marriage or sponsorship by a legal permanent resident within their family. While several in the sample considered getting married to a U.S. citizen, a few of them actually did, and thus were in the process of obtaining status. For Claudia (NJ), her situation was quickly going to be fixed: "I recently got married, last year [...] we have talked to a lawyer and she told us that I could apply for parole, because I am married to an American citizen. But before that, anybody that tried to get married to a citizen would not have been able to change their status. That's the biggest misconception everybody has. They'll say, just marry a citizen. But it does not apply to all cases." In her case, DACA did not represent an interesting solution, since marriage to a U.S. citizen would lead to permanent resident status, and ultimately citizenship.

For Ana (NY) and her sister, DACA was also not an option because their family was in the process of being sponsored by an aunt who had become a U.S. citizen through her own marriage with an American citizen. At the time of the interview, Ana's parents had already

gotten their papers, but her and her sister's fate was still unclear: "We needed a lawyer. Me and my sister, because we are over 21, and it's a little difficult. But since we entered the country within a date, and there is like a law that protects us, like the child protection act or something, that covers me and my sister." Ana let her parents handle the legal proceedings and the fees for the application and the lawyers, which amounted to several thousands of dollars. However, the fee seemed worth it to her, since once again sponsorship would lead to a more permanent solution than deferred action.

Most of the respondents who had voluntarily opted out of DACA experienced a rather difficult process, with the exception of Claudia (NJ), who did not make any negative comments about her own process toward citizenship. On the other end of the spectrum, Ivan (NJ) and his siblings were eligible for DACA but had decided to apply for residency through their mother, who had finally obtained her legal permanent resident status in late 2012. This came after the family had spent years under an order of deportation. Ivan explained: "our situation is tricky because we don't have residency but we have been able to... Because my mother's adjustment was denied at the beginning, so we were put into deportation proceedings [...] This was in 2007. In 2008, something happened with the deportation proceeding, so we were unable to apply for anything for two years, no license or work permit. And then in 2011, we applied again, [...] but unfortunately my work permit expired. And USCIS takes forever, so I'm actually crossing my fingers that they're going to do it this time around, because it hasn't come yet and it expires at the end of the month." Ivan's family's situation is an interesting illustration of the various steps through which most undocumented youths go through as they attempt to obtain permanent resident status in the United States. The process is rarely simple, with a single transition from undocumented to resident. Rather, undocumented youths often experience multiple changes in status, much as Ivan did, who went from being a dependent on his mother's

work visa, becoming undocumented and put in deportation proceedings after her company went down and her visa expired, then gaining a temporary work permit, and finally returning to undocumented status after the permit expired. For Ivan and his siblings, DACA did not represent a proper solution because it does not provide a permanent solution to their situation. They therefore opted to attempt once again to become legal permanent residents, but acknowledged that the process can be grueling and often disappointing.

While most of the respondents applied for DACA, several opted for other solutions, based on their family history and their personal experience. Table 9.1 below summarizes the situation of the respondents who participated in the interviews.

**Table 9.1 Status of interview respondents at the time of interview**

Status of interviewee	Number of respondents
Undocumented – not DACA eligible	5
Undocumented – DACA pending	9
Undocumented – under DACA	35
Undocumented - chose not to apply for DACA	1
Changing status toward Legal Permanent Resident	10
- Marriage	- 3
- Sponsorship by family member	- 6
- Special visa	- 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

As seen in the table, the majority of the respondents was eligible for DACA and applied for it. Those who were not eligible, as indicated above, were so because they had either come to the US after they turned 16, or because they had been living in the US for less than 5 years by June 15, 2012. Only one respondent had actually so far refused to apply because he considered



the policy to be less than what undocumented youths deserved from the government. However, he himself admitted that he may apply in the future, especially after seeing his friends obtain a social security number and get better jobs. A small proportion of the respondents had options beside DACA, such as obtaining legal permanent resident status, most likely because they were being sponsored by a family member, or because they had married an American citizen. One respondent was in the process of applying for a U-visa for victims of criminal activity, which allows recipients to apply for permanent resident status after 3 years.

### **DACA application issues**

The application process for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was fraught with issues that respondents noted throughout the interviews. Most of the problems brought up were related to obtaining assistance for the application, paying for the fees, and to the timing of the introduction of the policy just a few months before the 2012 presidential election. Respondents noted their hesitation in applying before the election, for fear that the Republican candidate would win and cancel the newly introduced policy.

#### *Assistance with the application process*

Undocumented youths and their families were presented with several choices in terms of how to go about applying for DACA. Some respondents chose to apply on their own, after looking up information about the requirements online. This was only a small minority of DACA recipients among the sample, the vast majority opting to consult with a lawyer or an organization to make sure that their application was done right. The problem with filling out the application on their own is that it places the burden of research one's own compliance with the requirements on the potential recipients themselves – undocumented youths under 30 who may

not be knowledgeable enough about legal proceedings. For example, Jesus (NJ) completed the application by himself: “I just went online. Just on the government website. It was not hard. I was just looking at the documents.” He explained that he was able to apply by himself because his parents are “very organized”, and were therefore able to provide all of the school-related documentation to support his application. The fact that his parents are so organized helped alleviate the stress related to the application process. Similar feelings were expressed by Dario (NY) who also applied on his own. He explained that he sent in more than what was asked, for fear of being rejected: “Actually the same night that it was announced that the forms were out, I went online and downloaded them all because I wanted to know everything. I actually didn’t sleep that night because I wanted to go through all the papers. I sent in things that they didn’t need, like every single report card, I sent it in. [...] I overnighted it.” For Dario, the process was both exciting and stressful, but the fact that he got a response within a couple of months made it worthwhile for him.

For most of those who had applied for DACA, whether they had obtained the papers or not, the application process was associated with high anxiety. In order to deal with this issue, most respondents chose to get help for their application, either from a lawyer or from an immigrant-rights organization, the latter often offering free legal services. Even though using the services of a lawyer was the most expensive option, most respondents who sought help decided to use one. The reason for that is that lawyers were considered “professional help”, and therefore more trustworthy than immigrant advocacy groups or youth organizations. Many youths were also encouraged to use lawyers by their parents, who did not trust immigrant organizations with the paperwork. This was the case for Ruben (NY), who first considered applying on his own since all of the paperwork and requirements were available online, but was convinced otherwise by his family: “They had all of the forms online. Then, when [my parents]

went to a lawyer, he told me the same things. Like you know, you're acceptable. Just apply. [...] Because I was thinking of doing it myself, but then my uncle was like, 'No. These are professionals, they know these things.'" Joel (NY) was also indifferent in terms of where the help was coming from, but ultimately was convinced by his father to hire a lawyer to go over his application: "I know that there's some communities [...], they help out immigrants, and they do it for free [...] I didn't do that, I went to a lawyer directly [...] My dad offered, he said it would be better if we go to a lawyer directly [...] It is obviously more money than if we had decided to go to one of these organizations. I guess my dad thought it was worth it to spend the money, so we could get it more quickly." For his father, using a lawyer was a guarantee that the paperwork would be processed more quickly. However Joel explained that the only reason that he used a lawyer was because his father offered to pay for it. Otherwise, he would have relied on the services of a community organization. In his case, financial means played a role in determining which kind of help to rely on.

Jorge's parents (NJ) also shared the view that using a lawyer was better than relying on any immigrant or community organization, but their reasoning was related to issues of trust. He explained: "Well, according to the values of my parents, if something is free it is because something is wrong [...] I mean they would be skeptical about it, because mostly they think that nothing comes for free. There is always a little cost somewhere behind, that is the reason that they are giving it for free. So they always think like, if they are giving this for free, in the long run they're going to ask something from me [...] That is how their heads work." Trust thus plays a large role in undocumented immigrants' decision to ask for help, and whom to ask for help. The problem with this approach is that it places a large burden on the family's finances, especially if several children are eligible to apply for DACA. In Jorge's case this meant that only he was able to apply, while his siblings had to wait for his parents to save more

money for their applications. He related his family's approach to the application: "Well, because of money, I am the only one that has been able to apply. [...] Lawyers around here they will charge you no less than 800 per person, plus the 400 and something for the application. So that is like \$1200 at least per person."

Those who obtained free help from an immigrant organization tended to be those respondents who were more involved in the movement, and were active members of immigrant rights groups or community organizations. For example, Laura (NJ) applied for DACA with the help of the New Jersey Dream Act Coalition: "I am part of NJDAC, and we held application drives back in August. It was very well organized [...] and I guess I got some practice. Lawyers are really expensive [...] I'm not saying not to go to a lawyer because some cases are very difficult, but my case was not. I don't have a criminal record, so I think it was pretty straightforward. So I just applied for it by myself." In her case, Laura had one of the lawyers who volunteered at the event organized by NJDAC look over her application to ensure that everything was fine – for free. She was therefore able to benefit doubly from her involvement with an immigrant rights organization: she gained in training and skills due to the organization of application drives, and she had someone review her DACA application before she sent it in.

In the same way, Leticia (NY) became involved with Make the Road New York when she was in high school, right around the time the DREAM Act was introduced in 2009-2010: "I went to an organization called Make the Road NY, and it's about illegal immigrant people, they fight for their rights. At the time, we were fighting for the Dream Act, so we went to Washington, DC. [...] I also helped at the time the program passed through for illegal students to have the work permit [...] I was also helping with that." In Leticia's case, she was first introduced to the organization and participated in rallies and demonstrations for the DREAM Act, and later on volunteered when Make the Road New York ran workshops and clinics about

DACA application procedures. She was also able to learn from them how to fill out the application, and had one of the lawyers of the organization review her application before she sent it in. Those youths who benefitted from the events organized by immigrant rights organizations tended to be those who were already involved with them, or whose friends were involved with them. Because of this connection, the organizations held a higher level of trust in their minds, and they had no problems relying on their help rather than paying for their own lawyers. There is therefore a great variation in the type of help that undocumented youths were able to obtain to fill out and send out their application for DACA, based on access, trust, and income.

#### *Waiting until after the Presidential election*

The timing of the introduction of DACA affected the way that potential recipients of the policy actually approached their application procedure. The policy was introduced by the President at a press conference in June 2012, and applications could begin on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Early literature shows that applications peaked in November, then started decreasing in November, and progressively tapered after that (Singer and Prchal Svajlenka, 2013). However, because the presidential election was held in early November, many respondents in the interview expressed their reluctance to apply before the presidential election, for fear of giving up information that could be used against them by a Republican administration.

Several of them indicated that they waited until after the election to apply due to the perceived difference in the candidates' approaches to immigration policy. Marta's comments (NJ) illustrate the climate in which she and her siblings applied for DACA: "We did not wait. Some people around us, they did not want to do it because they were afraid that if Obama did not stay... Because you are giving them your information, they could deport you at any time.

So some of my relatives did not do it but my parents decided to do it right away. What's meant to be is meant to be, so we did it right away." From her family's perspective, applying before the election was potentially dangerous, yet they sent in their applications. However, the levels of anxiety associated with applying may have been heightened for some respondents due to the attitudes of their close circle of family and friends. Ofelia (NJ), who was very involved with her high school Dream Team before she graduated, and also worked with other activists at NJDAC and United We Dream, admitted that in spite of all her activism she opted to wait until after the election to send in her application: "But I'm not going to lie, I did send it around November, right after Obama got elected. I was the little punk that waited until after the election because I was afraid. I was afraid that we were just going to be a number in the system that they can track down. And to this day, [...] I still feel like, what happens when it expires? Who am I going to go to? [...] We're just going to be another expired visa in the system, a good excuse to kick us out."

The timing of the introduction of the policy emphasized the political nature of the administration's decision, which did not escape the potential respondents. As discussed below, many saw DACA as a pale copy of the failed Dream Act. Nevertheless, those who were likely to have waited in order to apply were also those undocumented youths who were more knowledgeable politically, who had a clearer understanding of immigration reform issues, and who had been involved with community and immigrant rights organizations. Higher levels of engagement and political activities led to a higher level of distrust toward the policy.

*"I was saving that for tuition!" - Paying for DACA*

The final issue with the application process was the financial aspect of DACA. The USCIS website indicates that the \$465 fees for the application cannot be waived, but that there can be

“fee exemptions” for those who are homeless or in foster care, those who suffer from a serious chronic illness and whose income is under 150 percent of the poverty level, and for those who are more than \$25,000 in debt due to medical expenses and whose income is less than 150 percent of the poverty level. The lack of clarity, especially the potential confusion between “waiver” and “exemption”, in addition to the extraordinary burden of asking for a fee exemption – which must be done before deferred action is applied for – can become puzzling for undocumented youths who are unfamiliar with these types of proceedings. None of the youths interviewed who had applied for deferred action had asked for an exemption. During an information session held at St Peters University in New Jersey in early December 2013 the issue of paying for the application and obtaining an exemption was brought up by a member of the audience. What was interesting was that the people who asked the question were themselves DACA recipients who had applied months before – if not a year earlier – and had never heard of the fact that exemptions were available. DACA was therefore always associated with fees to pay, either because of the application itself or because of lawyers’ bills.

The variation in the amount paid by DACA respondents was striking, and showed that undocumented youths across the two states had very unequal access to information, assistance, and funds for the application. Those who paid the least were those who applied with the help of a community or an immigrant rights organization. Laura (NJ) was helped for free by a lawyer who participated in a DACA application drive that she helped organized, but she still had to find \$465 for the application, which was no easy task. She explained: “my friend [...] asked me why I was waiting for so long to apply, and I was helping all these people. We were assisting so many people, but we hadn’t applied ourselves. And I was like, ‘I don’t have any money right now’. So for my birthday she gave me \$200, and that helped out a lot.” Cristina (NJ) also benefitted from the support of a youth-led organization, and therefore only had to pay for the

application fees: “The New Jersey dream act coalition offered an application drive, so I participated in that and we did it from there. Thank God I did not have to pay for that!” She still had to pay for the fees, but not for the lawyers. Alejandro (NY) applied at a workshop which was held at his community college: “It was 400 and something, the application. It was worth it because I didn’t have to pay for a lawyer. Because I went to a lawyer and he was going to charge me over \$2000. So, good thing I went to [the college]!” Once again, the respondent had been able to obtain free assistance for the application, leaving only the application fees to pay for.

Others found organizations that only required a small fee for their assistance. This was the case for Elsa (NJ), who explained: “I applied through Catholic charities. They had an application fee which was \$120, plus the fees of course.” In her case, the total cost was less than \$600, and she did not have to travel to fill out her application. However, considering that her brother is also eligible for DACA and that they live with their single mother, the cost per family can be tremendous even when one finds assistance for the application.

Lawyers’ fees were taken on either by the applicants themselves, or most of the time by their parents. Respondents paid for the lawyers themselves when the fees were lower than average, usually around \$300 for an application. According to Ernesto (NJ), paying \$300 per person for an application is on the lower end of paying for DACA: “Every single lawyer was charging differently, ranging from \$300 to almost \$1000. The one that we went to, it was I think something like \$300. It was not too bad.” Of course, each respondent’s perception of costs varied based on their family’s means and the number of people applying. Elias (NJ) indicated that he paid about \$300 to the lawyer who reviewed his application. When he was told that others had paid much more, he exclaimed: “I was saving that for tuition!”



Other also mentioned DACA in terms of classes that they could not register for because they could no longer afford them. Juana (NY) is a volunteer for the New York State Youth Leadership Coalition, and she witnessed many of her friends having to make tough choices when it came to paying for DACA: “It’s 465 [...] And that’s already one class, basically. [...] That’s how we measure things. Textbooks are like a hundred dollars, and then you have the class. A lot of people have had to weigh in paying for one class or paying for the deferred action application, because that’s about how much it’s costing.” Even in New York where undocumented youths can qualify for in-state tuition, they do not benefit from state aid and must pay out of pocket for any cost related to education, such as transportation and textbooks. For those who are enrolled in college, paying for DACA can thus jeopardize their ability to stay enrolled full time.

Some youths tried to avoid having to rely on their parents out of guilt. That was the case for Giuliana (NJ) and her siblings. She explained: “we definitely paid, \$900. [...] Per person. It was pretty crazy. We paid for it on our own. I’m sure if we would’ve asked, they would’ve paid for it. But we try to stay away from their cash.” Due to the further exclusion of her undocumented parents by the introduction of a policy for which they do not qualify, Giuliana and her siblings chose to pay for it themselves rather than ask her parents. In most other cases however, parents stepped in to help cover for the costs of the application.

Adriana (NJ) and her brother incurred a total cost of \$3000, which they could not afford: “My parents paid for all of it.” The same was true for Dario (NY), who had to cut his work hours to take care of his little brother after school. He indicated that he looked into the possibility of obtaining a waiver, to no avail: “I did hear was very hard to get the waiver. And honestly, I’m lucky enough to be living with my parents, and they gave me the money, so was able to apply for that.” Dora (NY) quickly calculated the costs of her application, and how she

paid for it: “About \$400 for the application, and we paid [the lawyer] about \$1000. [My mom] helped me out.” For all respondents paying for the application was a real challenge, which was only alleviated by a connection to an immigrant rights organization or by their parents’ ability to take on such a financial burden. Ultimately, the ability of undocumented youths to apply for DACA relied on a great variety of factors, which led to tremendous differences across cases in application assistance, costs incurred due to the process, and general levels of anxiety associated with the policy.

### **DACA implementation issues**

#### *Variation in application process*

Among respondents who had applied for DACA, there was a great variation in the implementation of the policy, whether it was the time needed to process an application, a sudden change in processing location, their ability to communicate with USCIS. These disparities were even experienced *within* families, when siblings’ applications sent in at the same time were processed in a very different manner. These variations increased the level of stress and anxiety associated with the policy, and discouraged respondents from further dealing with immigration service officials. Cristina (NJ) experienced some difficulty with her application, and ended up dealing with USCIS in a rather fatalistic way, in the same manner that other respondents did. She explained that some of the paperwork she had sent in was lost and had to be replaced, and at the time of her interview she still had not received a positive answer on her application: “I am waiting to get an answer back because they said that they lost my pictures, so I sent them back already. I have to wait to see when they will let me know. [...] I guess every case is different, or it depends who is looking up your application. It is just a matter of luck, you can say. We just have to be patient. It’s hard, but we just have to be

patient.” Since the only way to check one’s application status was online, there was no direct line of communication between applicants and officials in charge of processing their requests.

Others saw their application process delayed because of weather issues related to Hurricane Sandy, which hit the Northern East Coast of the United States on October 29, 2012, right when the number of applications for DACA reached its peak. This is what happened to Silvia (NY): “Because my application was in Vermont [...] then Sandy happens and everybody’s application [...] got] delayed by two or three months. In order to move the process forward, they shipped out a lot of those applications to Nebraska. Once it was over there, a lot of them started going faster. That’s how I got mine. Six months later, I finally got my work permit. Usually, it’s like two or three months.” Respondents living in New York and New Jersey saw their application process moved by USCIS officials to the Midwest, which made many of them nervous that parts of their applications would be lost. Both the uncertainty associated with the process and the unilateral style of communication by immigration officials increased the stress levels associated with the application process.

Most respondents admitted feeling defeated and anxious while they were waiting for their application to go through, either because they had had to wait a long time, or because they were still waiting by the time of their interview. Alejandra (NJ) explained that the whole process for her took over six months: “I had applied by November, because we were able to apply by August, as of August 17, I believe. I actually did not get my deferred action until six or seven months later. I really thought at some point that I was not going to get it. [...] I really thought I was going to lose that.” For those respondents who were enrolled in college while they were waiting for their application to go through, the time spent out of status was time during which they were not able to obtain a work permit, and therefore a potential internship or higher-paying job, both of which could be crucial for the further pursuit of their education. Juan’s

application (NY) was still pending at the time that his interview was conducted. He had been informed by USCIS that his application had been transferred to another office, but was unsure where or why that had happened. He was at a loss to describe his feelings throughout the process: “I’m still waiting. That’s the worst part of the system. I’ve been waiting for more than five months. I just heard that they transferred my case to another office because supposedly it’s going to move faster. So I’m hoping that I’m going to get it soon.” As the last sentence indicates, respondents waiting for their application to be processed were stuck “in limbo”, sometimes not knowing whether their application would be fully approved until they had obtained their work permit and social security number. The entire process of applying was most often described as a negative experience.

In addition to the general anxiety brought on by applying, some respondents often had to experience great discrepancies in the handling of cases from the same family which had been sent in at the same time. Luis (NJ) and his twin brother Virgilio (NJ) applied at the same time, a few months after applications were allowed to be sent in. Yet in spite of the complete similarity in their applications due to the fact that they have the exact same immigration history and went to the same high school, their applications were processed differently and Luis had to wait several months before obtaining his permit: “it was really weird. It was weird because my brother had applied for it, my older brother, and then my twin brother got it first. And then my older brother got it maybe two months afterwards. And I had to wait a long time. They would tell us that [it was] case officer, it depends on the case officer. I just waited longer than everybody else.” In his case, the level of discretion retained by case officers increased the apprehension he already felt after sending in all of his information to the federal government. The fact that he waited longer than his brothers also increased his fears that his application would not go through, and that he would eventually be deported.

For Jesus (NJ) and his sister, the difference was only a few weeks, but it was enough to create some potential tension between siblings who until then had shared a similar status – and had therefore been in an equally precarious situation: “It took me five months, actually. And my sister got it. I got so angry. My sister sent hers like three months later and got hers two weeks after I did. I mean, I was really happy for her, but I was also like, this is bullshit! This is ridiculous! How does this happen? I was like, [...] awesome for you! I’m so happy. Go away.” A similar situation occurred in Giuliana’s family (NY), with her two other siblings: “We all applied at the same time. My brother got his really quickly, like maybe a month later. Mine took like two months. And my sister’s took like six months. So it was like, definitely, those huge gaps between us for some reason.” No explanation was ever given by USCIS officials that could account for the gap in time to process applications sent in at the same time from people whose profile is very similar. The process of applying for DACA was therefore fraught with anxiety for respondents, and also created potentially disruptive situations within families due to the wide discrepancies in handling applications.

#### *Lack of knowledge and anxiety*

Based on the interviews of respondents, including those who had chosen a path toward status other than DACA, there was an overall uncertainty associated with the process of changing one’s status and dealing with USCIS. The lack of communication from the bureaucracy, combined with the discretion left to case officers and the necessity to treat applications separately rather than by family led to an increase in the levels of anxiety experienced by respondents. This was the case even for those who were applying for legal permanent resident status. At the time of her interview, Inez (NJ) and her brothers were in the process of applying for residency based on the sponsorship of their mother, who had finally

obtained status the year before. Inez attempted to describe the evolution of her family's situation over the years, but progressively lost her train of thought due to the many changes they had experienced. She related several steps in her family's immigration history:

“I don't know the exact date, but I remember in high school I had to go to the immigration court [...] My father could no longer work at jobs that required [permits], so it was a mess. They kind of had to keep it on the low that we were no longer with a valid authorization card. [...] We went to court because of the order of deportation. We had to prove that we were a good family [...] When that happened, from what my parents have explained to me, the judge's order never went to USCIS. They did not get it, so they had our process halted. [...] It was very strange the way that things worked out. Then my mom got it but then the rest of our cases did not move forward...”

She was at a loss to explain what exactly would happen to her own case compared to her mother's case, or why her mother had obtained residency but the rest of the family had not. When I asked her what her plans were for the next few years in regards to her education, she indicated that everything depended on her ability to change her status, but the exact date of that change was unclear. The lack of communication on the part of immigration officials thus also affects families of undocumented youths, and limits their ability to make clear plans for the future. This is the case even for youths who have received their two-year permits under DACA, and also for those who are in the process of obtaining a status that is more permanent.

### **Response to the change in policy**

Beyond the application process, the majority of respondents described positive side-effects of having obtained deferred action. The change brought the possibility of obtaining a better job,

an internship through college, and among some a sense of relief after years of fear due to their precarious status. A couple of respondents were also able to find out about other policies that they qualified for while being screened for DACA. This was the case for Juana (NY), a member of the New York State Youth Leadership Coalition (YLC), who applied for a visa that will eventually allow her to qualify for permanent resident status: “I was being screened for deferred action to see if I really was eligible for it, and then through the screening process the attorney [...] told me that I was eligible for something else. [...] we were looking at both, and then I just decided to apply for one instead.” Thus the introduction of DACA allowed undocumented youth to make contact with immigration specialists, which they had no incentive to do prior to June 2012. They were able to obtain more information about their status and their ability to change it for a more permanent – and safe – situation in the United States.

#### *Positive evolution due to change in status*

For undocumented youths who have lived most of their lives in the United States, their status has been a source of anxiety and fear. Applying for – and obtaining – deferred action has helped them move on from this fear, at least temporarily. This is the case for Virgilio (NJ), whose family had to move suddenly while he was in high school after they were notified of their order of deportation. He explains his feelings throughout that time: “I never really felt safe, not until we got DACA. I’ve never felt safe my whole life.” He also explained that DACA has changed his parents’ attitude toward his and his brothers’ activities away from home now that they are covered by the policy. They are less worried about any encounters with the police or with immigration officials, and are thus giving them more freedom to go as they please. Thus even though only undocumented youths under the age of 31 qualified for DACA, there were entire families who were affected by the policy.

The same goes for Sara (NJ), who plans on doing the traveling that she had until then avoided to do for fear of being caught without the proper documentation. She explains her plans for the summer now that she has obtained her paperwork: “This summer [...] I do plan on doing some [...] cross-country road trip. [...] Before, I used to be scared because if anyone stops me and asked me for documentation, I could get deported easily. But now with DACA, it’s so much easier. I don’t have that fear anymore.” The introduction of this policy has allowed undocumented youths to get a sense of normalcy in their lives, as they are now able to act and make choices similar to those of their peers in high school and college. A similar feeling was expressed by Gael (NY), who describes personal, psychological changes in himself due to the policy: “I guess the fact that I’m a lot more confident in myself as a person now. You know, I have no reason to fear, because of Deferred Action. I can’t be touched!” His status is no longer an “obstacle” for him, as he explains it.

Traveling was a new possibility that was mentioned by several respondents, especially when they themselves had been prevented from going on school trips due to their undocumented status. For Ernesto (NJ), traveling is the first exciting change that was brought on by DACA, especially after hearing his friends travel to exotic destinations for Spring Break all through high school. He plans on taking advantage of this new opportunity: “I have not traveled a lot, no. Not until now that deferred action was passed, at least now I have the opportunity to go somewhere else. I have not decided yet, but I was thinking Florida, for the summer. California would be nice too. It’s always really nice over there.” They are now able to focus on the same issues as their peers as well, like school and finding a job that fits their qualifications and aspirations. For Dora (NY), obtaining DACA also means that she no longer feels like an outcast in society: “I recently applied for deferred action, [...] so I have a social and I can work. I’m currently working and I have a social life. I feel like more “normal” now.



So right now my focus is just finish school.” Instead of having to work extra-hours at a low-paid, undeclared job, Dora can now work as many hours as her friends and spend more time with them. She can also focus on school, and can afford to take more classes.

The main advantage of DACA for respondents was the ability to take advantage of better economic opportunities, whether because of jobs or because their new status gives them a social security number so they can become licensed nurses or therapists. For Omar (NJ), the main change was in his work, and how his ability to obtain a better-paid job would benefit his entire family: “Once I got my DACA, and a little bit before that, I had been working a lot more hours so then I could focus more on school and [my parents] could focus more on mortgage, bills, food...” Once again, a policy intended for undocumented youths under 31 is beneficial to the entire family, especially among those where every income matters.

The same was true for Sandro (NY), who is glad to be rid of the hassle of finding a job, and having to choose between low-wage work or better-paid jobs with fake papers: “It just helps to find jobs. If they ask for a social, now I can actually provide them with a social. And before, it was [...] low-wage work. Or you had to find something [...] under the table.” In Marta’s case (NJ), DACA was introduced at the perfect time so that she could become a licensed nurse, which requires a social security number. She explains that she obtained her paperwork just in time for her graduation, having used her parent’s tax identification number for school up to that point: “But with this it does make a difference once I graduate from here, because without a social I would not be able to get a license to become a nurse. So it came right at the perfect time. [...] If you’re not legally here, there never going to let you get a license, because they have to check you out and they can’t just give it to anybody.” Having DACA thus opens more possibility for undocumented youths, not only because of the salaries that they

qualify for, but also because of the number of licensed jobs that until they were restricted for them.

Finally, another change which was introduced with DACA was the possibility to obtain a driver's license. This was especially important for youths living in areas that do not have extensive public transportations, like the outskirts of New York City or northern New Jersey outside of the Newark-Jersey City area. Joel (NY), who grew up in Queens, NY, explains that he no longer has to rely on his friends for transportation: "I got my work permit and social security number. [...] I went and took the driving test, and passed it, and so now I can get my permit. [...] I can drive now. Before, my friends you know, I guess you took it for granted, just knowing the fact that I can't get it, that when I got it, it meant something to me." Just like Dora explained it, for Joel the ability to obtain a license means that he no longer feels different from his friends, that he has also gained a sense of "normalcy". DACA has opened many opportunities for undocumented youths, economic ones mainly, but also for their social life.

#### *New responsibilities due to DACA*

In mixed-status families, having children obtain DACA can also mean that their change in status will lead to difference between siblings, or between parents' status and that of their children. The fact that DACA opens the door to new economic, legal, and social opportunities can therefore also bring on more responsibilities for undocumented youths. Even though most of the respondents welcomed the ability to work and make more money, and to drive, some expressed a little concern about the responsibilities brought on by their new status. As Laura (NJ) explained: "Life has changed, definitely. [...] but it brings a lot of pressure too. Because I am one of the only one in my household now who [...] has that. [...] I am the only one that is going to start driving, so that's a lot of things to do. And I'm very grateful and I'm glad that I

can do all those things for them if they ask for a ride, but that means I have to get a car and that's very expensive. So that's a lot of pressure.” Thus the new opportunities brought on by DACA also highlight the fact that the policy is potentially disruptive for families with undocumented children, because as some of their siblings or parents may be excluded from such benefits they may come to rely increasingly on the beneficiaries of DACA. This is one of the consequences of “piecemeal” immigration reform and of the different treatment of certain immigrant groups – mainly those who are older and less educated.

### **Views on the policy**

#### *Confusion about the nature of the policy*

Undocumented youths differed in their views of DACA depending on their levels of political knowledge and civic/political engagement. Those who were the least knowledgeable about immigration and politics in general showed some confusion between DACA and the DREAM Act, several of them believing that the two were actually the same policy. On the other hand, those who were more involved politically were able to distinguish between the two, and to cast some judgment on the content of the policy as well as the possible motivation behind the administration decision to introduce DACA.

For those who were not very involved, there seemed to be a great amount of confusion between the DREAM Act and DACA. When Raul (NJ) was asked whether he had heard of the DREAM Act, his answer was: “Yeah, because I applied for it.” From the rest of the conversation, it appeared that he had indeed applied for DACA, but in his view the two policies were the same. This is likely due to the way that each proposal was defended by the Obama administration, as each was presented as a policy that would benefit deserving undocumented youths who had shown promise through school or their involvement in the military. The same

confusion was expressed by others, who were also not involved in any civic or political organization. When Adriana (NJ) tried to recall a specific event from the summer of 2012, she described it in these terms: “I think it was after the Dream Act came out, I mean deferred action.” The difference between the two policies is less than clear in her mind. Carla (NJ) is just starting college, and has so far only been involved in a church youth group. When she was asked about the first time that she heard about the Dream Act, she said it was through a friend: “He texted me and he sent me the link for the news on the phone. Because we had just talked, like a week before that, before they had approved it.” When pressed further, it also appeared that she was speaking of the introduction of DACA in June 2012, which had relieved her and her friends tremendously as they were thinking of moving back to their countries of origin.

Such confusion can be caused by the way the two policies were described in the media, and because they both focused on a certain category of undocumented youths. But through the interviews, it appeared as though the people around undocumented youths, especially in their high schools and colleges, were also confused about the difference between the two policies. This lack of information is therefore paralleled among those who should be the ones to teach undocumented youths. Hugo (NJ) for example related how he had heard about DACA for the first time: “I remember that during my prom, my high school teacher came in, and she was like, “The dream act passed! The Dream act passed!” And I was like, which Dream act? I didn’t even know. It was for DACA.” It is therefore not simply undocumented youths who are not involved in the policy debates who tend to be misinformed about DACA and the DREAM Act. Their confusion is encouraged by their environment, be it from the news they hear or the educators around them.

Those who had been more involved in the undocumented students’ movement, even if they were no longer active, were more capable of differentiating between DACA and the DREAM

Act. Leticia (NY) for example had been involved with Make the Road New York during her high school years, and had participated in demonstrations in Washington, DC. Her description of the DREAM Act and DACA clearly shows that she understands the limitations of the latter because of her previous involvement: “I was really involved with the Dream Act action, and this idea of having papers and going to school, and helping students [...] But they changed it, and now they just gave us the work permit, which is one step. But it’s basically one step at a time.” Civic and political engagement is therefore crucial for undocumented youths to gain the skills and understanding regarding policy debates. Through their own engagement, they can also educate the people around them, whether their family or their educators, on the policies that affect the immigrant community.

#### *Disappointment because of policy limitation*

For undocumented youths, DACA represented a step forward, but remained a limited measure that would only help them make some gains in the labor market. DACA does not provide a path to citizenship, and it is limited in time. For those who were under 31 as of June 15, 2012, the two-year stay of deportation can be renewed. Yet respondents who were benefitting from the policy expressed their concerns about such a limited measure, and criticized the government for placing them yet again in an uncertain situation.

For those respondents who are more knowledgeable about immigration policy, being covered by DACA brought some benefits but also meant that they would remain in a precarious situation. For Roberto (NY), the policy did not allow him to make plans for the future, the way a path to citizenship would have. He explained that he could not project himself far ahead: “Because I don’t know... So much of that is up in the air, depending on whether or not things change for me. Because the deferred action helped me out, [...] I can work, but you know, if I

have to keep renewing it every two years, if I could never vote, if I can't have a passport. [...] So I mean, I think the idea has crossed my mind, if things really don't change, [...] if things get super ultraconservative here, would I move back to Columbia? Maybe." Thus in spite of having obtained deferred action, some respondents would still consider moving back to their country of origin. For Roberto, this was becoming necessary because of the impossibility to make long-term plans for the future, as these plans could be affected by his own status or by a change in government administration.

The idea that undocumented youths are particularly vulnerable to changes in partisan control was shared widely among respondents. Alejandra (NJ) explained how nervous she felt throughout the presidential election night of November 6, 2012: "At a point, I just turned off the TV because I kind of thought that Romney was going to win. At that point, I was like, great, we're going to lose our deferred action. That's how I saw it." For those who had gained coverage under DACA, the new status did not seem like a sufficient guarantee of protection from deportation. The sense of precariousness and vulnerability did not abate after obtaining DACA, most particularly among those who were interested in politics and followed policy debates. Leandra (NJ) was active in several advocacy groups in northern New Jersey, and was a member of Choforitos United, a recently created immigrant rights group in Union City, NJ. She herself described the limitations of her new status, and how undocumented youths remained helpless in the U.S. immigration system: "We can't travel because we are undocumented, but with the whole DACA thing, I think you can if you ask permission from Homeland security. But even that is not advisable, because if there is a single little glitch, you might not be able to come back. So I am not going to do it." Described in this manner, DACA did not simply bring the benefits that were described above, it also brought up a whole new host of questions about the future of DACA recipients and their ability to make plans for their lives.

For some of the respondents, being under DACA took away some of their safety in the sense that they were forced to give up all of their personal information to USCIS, while only receiving a renewable, two-year work permit from the government. This meant that they no longer had the “safety net” of the shadows, and yet were still not on their way to citizenship. Their DACA status thus became a new source of anxiety. At the end of his interview, Luis (NJ) asked multiple questions about DACA and the future of the policy, which clearly showed his newly developed fears: “there is still my future after deferred action, like what happens then? I am a bit relieved, yeah, but I feel like there is still so much to do. [...] What happens if after Obama a Republican president gets elected? Will it be taken away? Are we all going to get deported? So sure, this was like a big sigh of relief, but now there is a new thing that just builds up. It’s like a never ending thing until you can finally get citizenship or residency.” His concerns also focused on the partisan divide over the issue of immigration, and on the potential threat posed by Republican office holders for undocumented immigrants.

His point of view was shared by Gael (NY), who went further in denouncing the utilization by the government of undocumented youth during the electoral campaign of 2012: “What’s this deferred action going to lead to? [...] Is it going to last only for Obama’s term or is it something that’s going to build something? [...] Will it be over or will they give it another shot? Are they going to open a way for legalization or are we going to have to live with unaccomplished dreams and missed opportunities? [...] I think [...] it’s a political move. It was no salvation.” Here the tone is clear: DACA simply extends access to the labor market for a few years, but the main point of introducing the policy was to gather support – mostly from the Latino community – for the Democratic ticket in 2012. The issue of political manipulation will be dealt below, but what is important here is that for those youths who are familiar with the

DREAM Act and various attempts at immigration reform, DACA extended their precarious status instead of fixing it.

Other respondents expressed their strong disappointment about the policy, since they felt that it was not what had been advertised by the administration in the past. For Ivan (NJ), the Obama administration had made a choice of not pursuing immigration reform earlier, and only provided DACA as a last-minute program for undocumented youths: “I personally think that Obama did what he did, DACA, to help him get reelected. [...] I know many people who have benefited from it, but I know it’s a Band-Aid. He should’ve done better stuff, [...] when he first started after he had made all of those promises.” For these youths who are more educated and more politically knowledgeable, it is important to continue to ask for a path to citizenship in order to gain the right to vote and be able to make demands on elected officials. Ivan (NJ) presented the idea that undocumented youths – and American youths in general – should demand more from their government, but also from themselves. The key for that would be to adopt a policy that would allow them to vote, and thus connect with elected officials: “You can be complacent and say, now I can travel, now you can work, and I think that’s great but eventually you want to exercise your right to elect officials.” For many DACA recipients, the policy was severely limited in terms of what it offered undocumented youths, while also prolonging their precarious status in the United States.

### *Policy rejection by activists*

Beyond being disappointed because of the limits of the policy, those undocumented youths who were highly involved activists expressed their rejection of DACA as a solution for immigration issues. Several of them indicated that they even hesitated before applying because they did not want to participate in a sub-par system created by the administration. For Yanelly



(NY), who participates in activities with the YLC in New York and is a member of her college's Dream Team, the decision to apply for DACA was not an obvious one. She explains that unlike others she did not have as much pressure to apply because she already had a job. She therefore had to make a decision to apply based on other criteria, such as how the policy could benefit her in the long run, and if she could wait for something else. She eventually decided to apply: "even though I have helped other people do [their application], I was still waiting. I was just waiting to see if something better comes along, if it is worth it. Because I have my job, so I was already working, which is what DACA would've given me anyway."

Activists tended to express themselves in much harsher terms while expressing their views of the policy and of the administration that had introduced it. Andrea (NJ) is one of the co-founders of the New Jersey Dream Act coalition, and has been working on DREAM Act-related issues for several years already. She also hesitated before applying because she felt angry with the government, and cheated by the policy that was introduced. When asked why she waited months before applying, her answer left no doubt about her motivation: "I did not want to. I don't want to give them my fucking fingerprints! And they don't need my fucking money! I only want to give them something when I know that something is guaranteed, like a green card, which means that eventually I could sponsor my parents. I did not want to give them anything. [...] I was like, a work permit? I have been working for 14 years!" She openly made fun of how the policy was presented by its sponsors, and about the supposed opportunities now available to undocumented youths – such as the ability to work, which many of them had done before.

In New York, other activists were also hesitant to apply because they felt so dejected when the policy was introduced. Rosario (NY) is no longer involved in any immigrant group, but she used to be an active member of the YLC in New York and she helped found her college's

Dream Team within the CUNY system. Her rejection of the policy also made her wait longer than most in order to apply: “It’s funny because a lot of my friends actually already got their work permits [...] I think I was just very cynical for the first couple of months. Because I was like, thank you, but it’s not what I wanted. But a lot of people that I talked to were like, “You know, you worked hard for you degree, why don’t you take advantage of this?” So I applied, and it’s still in the process.” Having been part of earlier campaigns supporting the DREAM Act made these youths very familiar with the content of each policy, and highlighted the limitations of DACA compared to other proposals. The discrepancy between the two came as a shock for activists, who showed their rejection of the policy by opting out of it – at least for a few months.

*Policy change as a politically motivated move*

For those who were involved in the DREAM Act movement, the timing of the introduction of DACA made the policy appear as a political move on the part of the Democrats, and therefore nurtured a strong distrust of government among activists. Rafael (NY) was the only eligible youth in the sample who had chosen not to apply, specifically because he did not trust the government with his personal information: “I’m not going to apply for that. [...] I don’t trust the process. [...] Because what’s the purpose of giving you a permit and Social Security, but they don’t let you go somewhere else? [...] You can’t come back. So what’s the purpose? Right now, they do it because they need the money, and they know with the immigrants they’re going to get it.”

The fees required for DACA, along with the potential fines that were at the time being discussed in Congress regarding Comprehensive Immigration Reform, were seen by many respondents as unnecessary, and as a means for the government to take advantage of immigrant

families. Others expressed doubt as to whether the administration really sought to reward undocumented youths for their drive and their success in educational endeavors, as the President's emphasis on DREAMers' educational achievements would suggest. As Ernesto (NJ) remarked, nothing about DACA helped him attend college: "I can now drive freely. That's pretty much all the change [...] Because we don't get in-state tuition, we don't get financial aid, we don't do anything! And it's funny because when the president was talking about it, he said that it was something that was going to help us, the students, improve our lives [...] But it's not really helping at all! I can drive to school, I can get a better job, but [...] studying wise, I can't get anything." Even though some states like New York did consider granting in-state tuition and financial aid to DACA recipients, most legislation was still pending at the time of the interviews, and the limited educational benefits of the policy were clear to the recipients.

For New York activists who had been working on the DREAM Act for years, the introduction of DACA led them to distance themselves further from the Obama administration, as they felt cheated by the promises that the then-candidate had made in 2008. For Rosario (NY), who explained above that she waited to apply because she disagreed with the policy, DACA was clearly a political move to seek reelection: "Or even passing Deferred Action, you know, it's good, but it's not what we wanted [...] I was like, 'why didn't he do this four years ago when he was able to? [...]' He said he was going to do something, but instead he waited until he was about to get reelected. [...] But it's all political agendas, and... that's what it is." Because of the limits included in the policy, activists who had spent years mobilizing on these issues felt dejected, and ended up taking a rather fatalistic approach to politics in which office holders can do what they want, especially when dealing with a vulnerable, non-voting population like undocumented immigrants. On the other hand, others were re-energized by limits of the policy, which prompted them to mobilize again in order to push the President

further in this direction. This was the case for Juana (NY), for whom distancing herself from DACA was all the easier as she did not apply for it: “But now, I think seeing all the damage that has been done to families, and DACA being used as a way to please the immigrant population, I think it just made me angry. [...] He was in office for 4 years, and it wasn’t until a few months before his election that he would announce DACA. I think it’s ridiculous.” Juana was still highly involved in the mobilization around the 2013 New York Dream Act, which would have granted some undocumented youths access to state financial aid. Her rejection of DACA and her distrust of the president’s administration increased her motivation for this new challenge.

## **Conclusion**

From the testimonies of undocumented youths living in New York and New Jersey, the application process and implementation of DACA showed some great variation in eligibility, in the type of assistance sought and received by undocumented families, in the costs of application, but also in the general levels of anxiety through the process and beyond the reception of DACA. Generally, the policy was better received by those who were less involved in the undocumented students’ movement, most likely because they were not aware of what had been proposed before, namely the differences between DACA and the DREAM Act, and the type of solution that activists had been demanding – citizenship, rather than a temporary permit.

However, among activists and respondents who were not involved but were politically knowledgeable, there was an overall high level of anxiety due to the lack of a definite solution proposed by the policy. For some of the respondents, it seems as if the introduction of DACA rather than a new push for the DREAM Act has led to a greater distance and increased distrust

of government, especially among respondents who showed an important level of political knowledge and committed activism on immigration-related issues. The inclusiveness of the policy touted by the administration was not received as such by undocumented activists, who viewed the policy as a disruptive one for the movement in general, but also for families, due to the de facto status separation from parents, high school dropouts, or youths who arrived after June 2007.

As Congress is currently considering a comprehensive immigration reform bill, the results from this chapter seem to illustrate the limitations inherent to piecemeal lawmaking and the role of policy design and policy image on respondents' views of government and levels of mobilization. When immigration bills divide undocumented immigrants into various categories of deservedness and grant relief to some but not to others, they essentially jeopardize whatever mobilization efforts have been created, and alienate activists who have been working on them. The adoption and implementation of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals illustrates these two consequences.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### Original hypotheses

The policy environment has an effect on immigrants' civic and political engagement. The goal of this project was to investigate the levels of belonging of undocumented youths. This included studying their levels of assimilation, as well as their civic and political participation, in the face of policies which keep them at the fringe of political participation.

According to the original claims of the dissertation, policies which are accommodating should be associated with greater feelings of belonging in the United States and greater levels of civic and political engagement, since they provide the necessary resources for greater assimilation (interaction through institutions) and engagement (skills, time, money, weak ties). On the other hand, contexts which are less accommodating were expected to provide lower levels of belonging in the United States, due to negative construction of undocumented immigrants through policy image, lack of interaction through institutions of higher education, and lack of resources for participation.

### Main Findings

This project highlights the importance of place in the processes of assimilation and political incorporation of immigrants in the United States. The findings from this dissertation confirm the role of individual characteristics such as immigration status and of outside characteristics like state of residence in promoting or hindering these processes. More

specifically, public policies which alter access to public institutions of higher education can play a role in the experiences of young immigrants living in the United States.

The literature on immigrant political incorporation emphasizes the role of resources such as time, money and civic skills in promoting greater participation. It also questions the possibility for undocumented immigrants to be included in the political arena because of the clear restrictions which the law imposes on them. However, the results from this project indicate that political incorporation can flow from identification with a specific cause, from recruitment by activists, and from the inconsistency in status from one institution to another. However, even if greater access to college allows some immigrant youths to benefit from key resources such as civic skills, time, and political allies, it appears that for undocumented youths these resources may be less important than the inconsistency in treatment brought on by public policies. Undocumented youths reacted in this study to the differences in the way government dealt with them in primary and secondary institutions on the one hand, and in the higher education system on the other.

This dissertation also provides insights into the consequences of policy design and policy image on the mobilization of interests. In this case, the movement which has supported the adoption of the DREAM Act and state-level tuition policies since 2001 has heavily relied on the image of the “perfect Dreamer,” that is to say an ideal version of undocumented youths which is supposed to help them appear more deserving in the eyes of the public and of lawmakers. This image of the group is directly related to the requirements of these policies, which target a subgroup within the undocumented population. The problem with this representation is that it offers a limited and limiting view of this group. On the one hand, it does not accurately portray the wide variation of experiences among undocumented youths, and therefore casts as “less” deserving those who do not fit this model. On the other hand, it also

jeopardizes the mobilization efforts of undocumented activists and their allies, because it deters those who do not fit this “perfect Dreamer” mold from identifying with and participating in the movement.

Finally, the results from this dissertation can help us improve the civic engagement levels and political participation of immigrant youths and of minority youths in general. Even though the results presented here are based on the experiences of young immigrants, they speak for the challenges encountered daily by minority youths in the United States. In particular, the study shows the importance of recruitment efforts and organizational style by policy advocates, and how public policies can compensate for the lack of resources experienced by certain groups. This dissertation also highlights the importance of the public image associated with a policy, and the role of activists in promoting inclusion or exclusion through its use.

### **Immigrant youth and belonging**

Study participants from the metropolitan area of New York City and northern New Jersey displayed high levels of linguistic assimilation and moderate ties to their country of origin. They were also characterized by a high proportion of college enrollment but low levels of educational attainment in college, even for the oldest group of immigrants over the age of 26. Most of them also displayed higher levels of belonging in the United States than in their country of origin. Results showed that these youths were able to create ties with people outside of their communities through work and school, and experienced higher levels of belonging outside of their community compared to within their community.

Nevertheless, the majority of respondents displayed low levels of trust in the United States, especially among those who were undocumented and those who lived in New Jersey. When looking at the educational experience of Latino immigrant youths, results indicated strong



achievement in high school and high levels of enrollment in college. However, most immigrant youths were concentrated in community colleges. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents showed a large discrepancy between their educational aspirations and expectations, once again especially among those who were undocumented and those who were living in New Jersey.

Finally, sense of belonging in the United States among respondents was mostly affected by individual-level characteristics such as how old they were when they arrived in the United States and their level of trust in the American Dream. Even though respondents from New Jersey experienced lower levels of trust in the United States, state of residence did not appear to affect sense of belonging significantly. The study therefore shows that state-level policies may not be as crucial in determining overall levels of belonging as personal experiences and time spent in the host country.

### **Undocumented youth and belonging**

Home is a complicated concept for undocumented youths, especially when variations in state policies affect their degree of participation in public institutions like colleges and universities. For undocumented youths, the definition of “home” oscillated between an understanding of the United States as “home” and one in which individuals remained somehow identified with their country of origin.

Overall, greater access to college seems to be associated with a greater desire to make long-term plans in one’s state of residence. In addition, undocumented youths who participated in the interviews constantly have to negotiate multiple circles of belonging which are available at the group level, including their families, their peers and friends, but also the undocumented students’ movement. Even if all of these circles are usually described as “safe” spaces for

undocumented youths, certain characteristics are likely to make them feel alienated and therefore reduce the number of spaces and places where they can feel like they truly belong.

In the case of the Dreamers' movement, the respondents' lack of identification with this group often led to an absence of political participation on issues relative to immigration or tuition equity. The study therefore highlights the role of place in promoting belonging among a marginalized group, but also the complexity of the process of identification at the group level related to the multiplicity of experiences within the undocumented population.

### **Immigrant youths and participation**

The results of the dissertation indicate that participants in the study tend to have low levels of civic engagement, moderate levels of political activity, and moderate levels of community or neighborhood engagement. Overall, respondents showed high levels of political efficacy, which supports findings relative to political activity and community engagement. For all of these measures, there are some differences across states and immigration statuses. It appears that respondents living in the state of New Jersey tend to have higher levels of engagement than those who live in New York. Additionally, undocumented respondents also reported higher levels of engagement than documented respondents.

This dissertation also includes indicators that could be barriers to the civic and political participation of Latino immigrant youths. Overall, undocumented immigrants were more likely to report higher levels of discrimination than those who were documented. In addition, only a minority of the parents of the participants had naturalized as U.S. citizens, even though the proportion was higher for respondents who were documented. This has two major consequences on the political incorporation of their children. On the one hand, non-citizen parents are less likely to constitute targets for political mobilization and recruitment from

outside sources such as political parties and interest groups, which reduces the number of opportunities for engagement for their family. On the other hand, this meant that these parents may also be less likely to provide their children with the resources necessary for political participation. In fact, parents were concentrated among low-skilled jobs, which led them to have very low levels of socio-economic status, particularly for those respondents who were undocumented.

The main factors which influence levels of civic engagement are respondents' political efficacy and their state of residence. The latter variable however was found to have the opposite effect of what was originally expected: living in a state with more restrictive policies actually appears to have a positive effect on civic engagement, compared to living in a state with more accommodating policies. Additional analyses show that the main factors playing a role in political participation are in fact individuals' undocumented status, their experience with discrimination, and their residence in a state with more restrictive policies regarding access to higher education. This shows that political mobilization among respondents was not due to the availability of resources provided by a more accommodating state. On the contrary, it seems that increased mobilization is the result of the challenges met by individuals, either due to their immigration status or due to the restrictive policies adopted by their state of residence.

### **Undocumented youths and participation**

The results indicate that greater access to public higher education provides greater resources for mobilization, such as political knowledge, support networks, weak ties, and allies who have access to government. Even if they are not always associated with greater levels of trust in government, policies promoting access to college were associated with an increased likelihood to make claims on government, whether at the state or at the federal level. The

dissertation also shows that there were differences in the organizational styles of advocates across the two states. Those in New York benefitted from a well-established and diverse coalition, and relied on traditional political activities which were in the end unsuccessful. However those in New Jersey were still in the process of creating and growing a coalition of supporters, and embraced more disruptive tactics which proved to be successful.

The analyses also reveal that greater difficulties to gain access to college may foster among certain youths a stronger necessity to question the status quo and their marginalized status in it, which can lead to academic motivation but also to political mobilization. This could provide an example of “belligerent” incorporation in which undocumented youths become involved in opposition to policies which deny them state benefits. State policies which limit access to higher education reduce the number of resources for political mobilization available to undocumented youths, such as weak ties, support from campus officials with access to government, and political knowledge.

The study therefore highlights the compensatory role of public policies in providing resources to those who may be lacking them, such as time, civic skills and political allies. These public policies can therefore foster the creation of an environment where engagement is more likely to occur.

### **Deservedness and immigration reform**

This dissertation points to the importance of policy design in creating and mobilizing interests. Policies such as the Dream Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals have helped create the image of the “perfect Dreamer”, the perfect undocumented youth, as the recipient of these accommodating policies. The key features of the narrative are directly created by the requirements included in these policies. The campaign pursued since 2001 by

undocumented youths has successfully transformed the policy image associated with young undocumented immigrants and has separated them from other, less “deserving” immigrants. However, the most recent generation of activists is now taking into consideration the possibility that this type of narrative can further marginalize other undocumented immigrants, especially those who may not fit the “perfect DREAMer” narrative.

The question remains of whether a new and more inclusive narrative will survive the multiple policies introduced in 2013 and 2014 regarding immigration reform and access to college for undocumented youths. Because policymakers have introduced bills which target separate groups, and have managed to craft very specific policy images for each of these groups, it is not easy for undocumented youths to choose whether they should support the DREAM Act, the KIDS Act, Comprehensive Immigration Reform, or the In-State for Dreamers Act. Therefore even though efforts are being made to promote a more inclusive policy narrative, the mobilization of undocumented youths may still be shaped by the design of policies introduced at different levels of government. The dissertation shows that when these policies create various definitions of deservedness, they jeopardize the mobilization efforts of immigration reformers.

### **Undocumented youth and DACA**

According to the interviews conducted with undocumented youths, the application process and the implementation of DACA showed some great variation in eligibility, in the type of assistance sought and received by undocumented families, in the costs of application, but also in the general levels of anxiety through the process and beyond the reception of DACA.

Generally, the policy was better received by those who were less involved in the undocumented students’ movement, usually because they were not aware of what had been

proposed before. These participants were not knowledgeable about the differences between DACA and the DREAM Act. Most importantly, they were less likely to highlight the fact that this was only a temporary solution rather than a path to citizenship.

However, among activists and respondents who were not involved but were politically knowledgeable, there was an overall high level of anxiety due to the lack of a definite solution proposed by the policy. On the contrary, it seems as if the introduction of DACA has led to experience more distrust toward the government. The inclusiveness of the policy touted by the administration was not received as such by undocumented activists, who viewed the program as a disruptive one for the movement in general, but also for families, due to the de facto status separation from parents, high school dropouts, or youths who arrived after June 2007. The dissertation therefore highlights the issues in implementation and design associated with the policy.

### **Limits of the design**

The main limitation of the design comes from its reliance on the self-identification of respondents. In addition, its geographical location in the main immigration gateways of the United States cautions against generalization. There are also some statistical limitations due to the reliance on non-random sampling. The sampling method used for the survey was not purely random because the survey was sent to organizations and associations for them to send to their members. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to minimize bias by sending the invitation to participate to a large number of diverse organizations within the metropolitan area.

Finally, this dissertation relies on the participation of young immigrants in institutions of higher education as the source of greater assimilation levels and sense of belonging. However, some may posit that college attendance itself is a *result* of increased sense of belonging in

American society, rather than a cause of increased attachment to the United States. Therefore, the analyses conducted used both college-attending and non-college attending youths, and controlled for age at arrival, length of stay in the United States and family background in order to look at the relationship between college attendance and sense of belonging in the way that is posited in the research question.

### **Future research**

Some of the findings of this dissertation beg for further research to be conducted. First, this study has highlighted some of the challenges met by mixed-status families, especially in regards to the relationship between undocumented youths and their U.S.-born siblings. It is therefore necessary to further investigate the consequences of multiple immigration statuses for the psychological, economical, and social development of the household, and how immigrant families cope with multiple strategies of incorporation.

Second, the dissertation has also showed how young activists are trying to promote a more comprehensive and inclusive image of the DREAM Act and of undocumented youths in general. While most of their efforts are directed at youths who may not as academically successful as the “perfect Dreamer” may require, others have sought to improve the representativeness of the movement by promoting non-Latino groups and leaders. Some of the chapters mention the mobilization of these non-Latino groups in the metropolitan area, especially Asian groups in New York and Filipino groups in New Jersey. It is crucial to study the emergence of these groups in comparison with the primarily Latino-led coalitions which are in place today. This would complement the literature on the political incorporation of immigrants, but also that of minorities.

Finally, considering the results of the two campaigns which were launched in New York and New Jersey between 2012 and 2014, it is essential to compare the styles of mobilization of the coalitions in these two states. This will help explain the failure of the New York mobilization in securing financial aid for undocumented youths, and the relative success of the New Jersey coalition in obtaining in-state tuition for these youths. Such a study would require elite interviews with government officials, staff, opponents and proponents of each bills, and with other activists who are not primarily focused on immigration reform.

These three possible areas of research should not be construed as the only promising future studies to be conducted following this dissertation. The study of immigration and immigrants allows for a wide diversity of research topics. However these particular endeavors would complement the findings of the current study, and would add important insights into the political incorporation of immigrants.



## **APPENDIXES**

## Appendix 1: Institutional Review Board approval, CUNY Graduate Center, 2012-2013



Human Research Protections Program  
Graduate School & University Center (CUNY) HRPP Office

DATE: November 19, 2012

TO: Fanny Lauby, MA  
FROM: Graduate School & University Center (CUNY) HRPP Office

PROJECT TITLE: [380329-1] State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: November 19, 2012  
EXPIRATION DATE: November 18, 2013  
RISK LEVEL: Minimal Risk

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review  
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category #6 & 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University Integrated IRB has APPROVED your research. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and assurance of the participant's understanding, followed by a signed consent form(s). Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

The University Integrated IRB has determined that a waiver of documentation of consent has been approved for this research, under 45 CFR 46.117.

Please note that any modifications/changes to the approved materials must be **approved by this IRB prior to implementation**. Please use the appropriate modification submission form for this request.

All **UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS (UPS)** involving risks to subjects or others, **NON-COMPLIANCE** issues, and **SUBJECT COMPLAINTS** must be reported promptly to this office. All sponsor reporting requirements must also be followed. Please use the appropriate submission form for this report.

This research **must receive continuing review and final IRB approval** before the expiration date of November 18, 2013. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for the IRB to conduct its review and obtain final IRB approval by that expiration date. Please use the appropriate continuation submission forms for this procedure. PLEASE NOTE: The regulations do **not** allow for any grace period or extension of approvals.

If you have any questions, please contact Kay Powell at 212-817-7525 or [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

## Appendix 2: Institutional Review Board approval, CUNY Graduate Center, 2013-2014



Human Research Protections Program  
Graduate School & University Center (CUNY) HRPP Office

DATE: November 28, 2013

TO: Fanny Lauby, MA  
FROM: Graduate School & University Center (CUNY) HRPP Office

PROJECT TITLE: [380329-3] State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: November 28, 2013  
EXPIRATION DATE: November 25, 2014  
RISK LEVEL: Minimal Risk

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review  
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review categories 6 & 7

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this project. The University Integrated IRB has APPROVED your research. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and assurance of the participant's understanding, followed by a signed consent form(s). Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any modifications/changes to the approved materials must be **approved by this IRB prior to implementation**. Please use the appropriate modification submission form for this request.

All **UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS (UPS)** involving risks to subjects or others, **NON-COMPLIANCE** issues, and **SUBJECT COMPLAINTS** must be reported promptly to this office. All sponsor reporting requirements must also be followed. Please use the appropriate submission form for this report.

This research **must receive continuing review and final IRB approval** before the expiration date of November 25, 2014. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for the IRB to conduct its review and obtain final IRB approval by that expiration date. Please use the appropriate continuation submission forms for this procedure. PLEASE NOTE: The regulations do **not** allow for any grace period or extension of approvals.

If you have any questions, please contact Antonia Santangelo at 212-817-7531 or [gc-irb2@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:gc-irb2@gc.cuny.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

### Appendix 3: Institutional Review Board approval, Rutgers University

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
ASB 111.3 Rutgers Plaza, Cook Campus  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

June 19, 2013

P.I. Name: Sidney  
Protocol #: 13-307M

Mira Sidney  
Department of Political Science - Newark  
Hill Hall, Room 723  
360 Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Newark-NJ

Dear Mira Sidney:

(  Initial /  Amendment /  Continuation /  Continuation w/ Amendment )

**Protocol Title:** "State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth"

This is to advise you that the above-referenced study has been presented to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, and the following action was taken subject to the conditions and explanations provided below:

<b>Approval Date:</b>	4/30/2013	<b>Expiration Date:</b>	4/29/2014
<b>Expedited Category(s):</b>	7	<b>Approved # of Subject(s):</b>	250

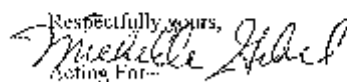
This approval is based on the assumption that the materials you submitted to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) contain a complete and accurate description of the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research. The following conditions apply:

- **This Approval:** The research will be conducted according to the most recent version of the protocol that was submitted. **This approval is valid ONLY for the dates listed above;**
- **Reporting-ORSP** must be immediately informed of any injuries to subjects that occur and/or problems that arise, in the course of your research;
- **Modifications-**Any proposed changes **MUST** be submitted to the IRB as an amendment for review and approval prior to implementation;
- **Consent Form(s)-**Each person who signs a consent document will be given a copy of that document, if you are using such documents in your research. The Principal Investigator must retain all signed documents for at least three years after the conclusion of the research;
- **Continuing Review-**You should receive a courtesy e-mail renewal notice for a Request for Continuing Review before the expiration of this project's approval. However, it is your responsibility to ensure that an application for continuing review has been submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the expiration date to extend the approval period;

**Additional Notes:** Expedited Approval per 45 CFR 46.110

**Failure to comply with these conditions will result in withdrawal of this approval.**

Please note that the IRB has the authority to observe, or have a third party observe, the consent process or the research itself. The Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) number for the Rutgers University IRB is FWA00002913; this number may be requested on funding applications or by collaborators.

Respectfully yours,  


Dr. Beverly Tepper, Ph.D.  
Professor  
Chair, Rutgers University Institutional Review Board

## Appendix 4: Institutional Review Board approval, Montclair State University

### **MONTCLAIR STATE** UNIVERSITY

March 15, 2013

Fanny Lauby  
City University of New York Graduate Center

Dear Ms. Lauby:

After an administrative review of your research and information provided in your *Request to Engage in Research with MSU Participants* form (submitted ; 03/08/2012), we approved your recruitment of Montclair students in this research study entitled "State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth" with one stipulation. We are requiring that you continue with your recruitment for this study by contacting the MSU Student Government Association (SGA). Direct recruitment of students or student groups will not be an acceptable form of recruitment at this time. The SGA may choose to forward on your recruitment emails on your behalf.

Since you are not affiliated with Montclair State University (MSU) this human subjects research activity did not constitute engagement of MSU employees, students or staff. This procedure constitutes an administrative review, not an IRB review. Responsibility for IRB review lies with the researcher's home institution. If required, please obtain site approval for addition of MSU as a recruitment site with your home institution. Please be aware that the Provost or other Designated Officials reserve the right to reject or terminate such activities from being conducted with Montclair students at any time. Significant changes to your protocol or any unanticipated adverse events should be reported to us within 3 business days.

If you have any questions regarding this review please contact me at [973-655-7781, [bergerh@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:bergerh@mail.montclair.edu)].

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,

Hila Berger  
Research Compliance Administrator

Cc: Dr. William Rosa, Professor, Spanish and Italian, Montclair State University  
Dr. Karen Pennington, Vice President for Student Development and Campus Life, Montclair State University

## Appendix 5: Institutional Review Board approval, William Paterson University

THE WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECT RESEARCH	
c/o Office of Sponsored Programs Raubinger Hall, Room 309 973-720-2852 (Phone) 973-720-3573 (Fax) <a href="http://www.wpunj.edu/osp/">http://www.wpunj.edu/osp/</a>	Chair: Professor Michael Figueroa (FigueroaM@wpunj.edu) College of Science and Health Contact: Martin Williams (williamsm@wpunj.edu) Office of Sponsored Programs

To: Fanny Lauby  
Department of Political Science, CUNY Graduate Center

From: Martin B. Williams *Martin B. Williams*

Subject: IRB Approval (Exempted Review)

Study: Protocol # 2013-320: *State laws regulating eligibility for in-state tuition and belonging among immigrant youth.*

Date: March 8, 2013

The IRB has APPROVED the above study involving human as research subjects. This study was approved as: Category: Expedited; vulnerable population: WPU Students.

IRB Number: 2013-320 This number is WPU's IRB identification that should be used on all consent forms and correspondence.

Approval Date: 3/8/2013  
**Expiration Date:** 3/7/2014

**This approval is for one year. It is your responsibility to insure that an application for continuing review approval (WPU IRB Form Appendix B) has been submitted before the expiration date noted above. If you do not receive approval before the expiration date, all study activities must stop until you receive a new approval letter. There will be no exceptions. In addition, you are required to submit an Appendix B form at the conclusion of the project. The WPU IRB will accept a report submitted to another office or agency (i.e. ART report) in lieu of the narrative report of progress attachment to Appendix B. The Appendix B can be accessed at: <http://www3.wpunj.edu/osp/>.**

**Consent Form:** All research subjects must use the approved Informed Consent Form. You are responsible for maintaining signed consent forms (if approved for Active Consent format) for each research subject for a period of at least three years after study completion.

**Mandatory Reporting to the IRB:** The principal investigator must report immediately any serious problem, adverse effect, or outcome that is encountered while using human subjects or any complaints from your subjects. In addition, the principal investigator must report any event or series of events that prompt the temporary or permanent suspension of a research project involving human subjects or any deviations from the approved protocol using Appendix B.

**Amendments/Modifications:** You are required to carry out this research as described in the protocol. All amendments/modifications of protocols involving human subjects must have prior IRB approval, except



those involving the prevention of immediate harm to a subject. Amendments/Modifications for the prevention of immediate harm to a subject must be reported within 24 hours to the IRB using Appendix B.

For exempted and expedited review protocols: the protocol will be reviewed by the entire IRB committee at its next meeting. Should questions arise that cannot be answered by the materials already provided, additional information may be requested from you. This most likely will not affect the approval status of your project—you are approved to initiate the project as of the date above, and you will not receive notice of the committee's final review. Only in the rare situation when serious questions arise will the IRB instruct that the project be discontinued until those questions are answered.

**Records/Documentation:** You are required to keep detailed records concerning this research project and appropriate documentation concerning Informed Consent in a readily accessible location for a period of not less than three (3) years. The IRB reserves the right to inspect all records, research tools and databases that are associated with this research.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Williams at 973-720-2852 or [williamsm@wpunj.edu](mailto:williamsm@wpunj.edu), or the IRB Committee Chairperson, Dr. Michael Figueroa, at [FigueroaM@wpunj.edu](mailto:FigueroaM@wpunj.edu).

Good Luck on your project.

Sign the Verification Statement below. Return the original signed copy of this memo to the IRB Office, c/o Office of Sponsored Programs, Raubinger Hall room 309, and retain a copy for your records. The IRB Office must receive the signed verification statement before research may begin.

#### VERIFICATION:

**By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received this approval and am aware of, and agree to abide by, all of its stipulations in order to maintain active approval status, including timely submission of continuing review applications and proposed protocol modification, as well as prompt reporting of adverse events, serious unanticipated problems, and protocol deviations. I am aware that it is my responsibility to be knowledgeable of all federal, state and university regulations regarding human subjects research.**

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Signature of Investigator

Date

## Appendix 6: Institutional Review Board approval, New Jersey Institute of Technology



**Institutional Review Board: HHS FWA 00003246  
Notice of Approval  
IRB Protocol Number: F 1149-13**

Principal Investigators: Fanny Lauby  
CUNY – Graduate Center

Title: State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth

Performance Site(s): NJIT:

Type of Review: FULL  EXPEDITED

Type of Approval: NEW  RENEWAL  REVISION

Approval Date: March 14, 2013

Expiration Date: March 13, 2014

1. **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Any adverse event(s) or unexpected event(s) that occur in conjunction with this study must be reported to the IRB Office immediately (973) 596-5825.
2. **RENEWAL:** Approval is valid until the expiration date on the protocol. You are required to apply to the IRB for a renewal prior to your expiration date for as long as the study is active. It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit the renewal in a timely manner.
3. **CONSENT:** All subjects must receive a copy of the consent form as submitted. Copies of signed consent forms must be kept on file with the principal investigator.
4. **SUBJECTS:** Number of subjects approved: 200
5. **DATA:** You agree that the data that will be reported will not identify in aggregate the results from NJIT participants.
6. NJIT's approval is contingent upon approval from the CUNY IRB.
7. The investigator(s) did not participate in the review, discussion, or vote of this protocol.
8. **APPROVAL IS GRANTED ON THE CONDITION THAT ANY DEVIATION FROM THE PROTOCOL WILL BE SUBMITTED, IN WRITING, TO THE IRB FOR SEPARATE REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

Judith Sheft, IRB Chair,



## Appendix 7: Consent form, English version, 2012-2013

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Fanny Lauby, CUNY Graduate Center**  
 Department of Political Science

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**Project Title:** State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth

**Principal Investigator:** Fanny Lauby  
 Doctoral Student, CUNY Graduate Center  
 Political Science Department, Room 5200  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 flauby@gc.cuny.edu

**Faculty Advisor:** John Mollenkopf  
 Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Sociology  
 CUNY Graduate Center, Center for Urban Research, Room 6202,  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu

**Site where study is to be conducted:** Greater New York and Northern New Jersey Metropolitan area

**Introduction/Purpose:** You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by **Fanny Lauby, doctoral student, CUNY Graduate Center**. The purpose of this research study is to provide insights into how immigrants come to feel part of the United States and their attitudes toward it. The results of this study may show an association between the state policies and the levels of belonging among immigrant youth of college age.

**Procedures:** Approximately 200 individuals are expected to participate in this study. Each subject will participate in a survey, and those who accept may be contacted to participate in a personal interview. The time commitment of each participant is expected to be **15 minutes** for those who answer the survey, and an additional hour for those who participate in the interview.

**Participant Requirements:** Participants should be youths between the ages of 18 and 30, living in the state of New York or New Jersey, and who were born in Latin America.

**Possible Discomforts and Risks:** The risks and discomfort associated with participation in this study are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. They may include minimal levels of discomfort and stress. To minimize these risks, care will be taken that the information collected is entirely anonymous, and that the data will remain confidential. No personally identifiable information will be stored with the responses that you provide. If you are bothered as a result of this study you should contact the principal investigator, Fanny Lauby, or the faculty advisor, John Mollenkopf.

<b>CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board</b>	
Approval Date:	<b>November 19, 2012</b>
Expiration Date:	<b>November 18, 2013</b>
Coordinator Initials:	<b>KE</b>

**Benefits:** There may be no personal benefits from direct participation in the study. However, participating in the study may increase general knowledge of young immigrants' paths of incorporation. The information is expected to be informative and helpful toward public policies which target immigrants.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is **voluntary**, and you may decide not to participate without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are free to stop your participation at any point. If you decide to leave the study, please contact the principal investigator Fanny Lauby to inform them of your decision.

**Financial Considerations:** Participation in this study will involve no cost to the subject. For your participation in this study your email address can be separately entered in a raffle to win an Ipad. The raffle will take place after the completion of the study, and the winner will be informed by email. For those who choose to be invited for a personal interview, compensation will be given in the form of a \$15 gift card at the end of the interview.

**Confidentiality:** The data obtained from you will be collected via a survey available online and in paper format. The interviews will be recorded if the participant agrees to it and transcribed to text. After the transcription is done the audio recording will be erased. The collected data will be accessible to the principal investigator and the IRB members and staff at the CUNY Graduate Center.

The researcher will protect your confidentiality by **waiving the signed consent form**, which means that your name and other personal identifiers will not be associated with the data collected. Each participant will be given a number and **no personally identifiable information will be stored** with the responses that you give. The collected data will be kept in encrypted files and on separate computers.

**Contact Questions/Persons:** If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Fanny Lauby, at [flaubv@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:flaubv@gc.cuny.edu) or 201.364.3412. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Kay Powell at [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu), or by phone at 212.817.7525.

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#### PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT

I have explained the study to the participant in language he/she understands, and he/she has agreed to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of  
Person Explaining  
Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Explaining Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of  
Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board	
Approval Date:	November 19, 2012
Expiration Date:	November 18, 2013
Coordinator Initials:	KP

## Appendix 8: Consent form, English version, 2013-2014

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board	
Approval Date:	November 26, 2013
Expiration Date:	November 25, 2014
Coordinator Initials:	AS

### CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

### Fanny Lauby, CUNY Graduate Center

Department of Political Science

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

**Project Title:** State Laws Regulating Eligibility for In-State Tuition and Belonging Among Immigrant Youth

**Principal Investigator:** Fanny Lauby  
 Doctoral Student, CUNY Graduate Center  
 Political Science Department, Room 5200  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 flauby@gc.cuny.edu

**Faculty Advisor:** John Mollenkopf  
 Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Sociology  
 CUNY Graduate Center, Center for Urban Research, Room 6202,  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu

**Site where study is to be conducted:** Greater New York and Northern New Jersey Metropolitan area

**Introduction/Purpose:** You are invited to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by **Fanny Lauby, doctoral student, CUNY Graduate Center**. The purpose of this research study is to provide insights into how immigrants come to feel part of the United States and their attitudes toward it. The results of this study may show an association between the state policies and the levels of belonging among immigrant youth of college age.

**Procedures:** Approximately 200 individuals are expected to participate in this study. Each subject will participate in a survey, and those who accept may be contacted to participate in a personal interview. The time commitment of each participant is expected to be **15 minutes** for those who answer the survey, and an additional hour for those who participate in the interview.

**Participant Requirements:** Participants should be youths between the ages of 18 and 30, living in the state of New York or New Jersey, and who were born in Latin America.

**Possible Discomforts and Risks:** The risks and discomfort associated with participation in this study are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. They may include minimal levels of discomfort and stress. To minimize these risks, care will be taken that the information collected is entirely anonymous, and that the data will remain confidential. No personally identifiable information will be stored with the responses that you provide. If you are bothered as a result of this study you should contact the principal investigator, Fanny Lauby, or the faculty advisor, John Mollenkopf.



**Benefits:** There may be no personal benefits from direct participation in the study. However, participating in the study may increase general knowledge of young immigrants' paths of incorporation. The information is expected to be informative and helpful toward public policies which target immigrants.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation in this study is **voluntary**, and you may decide not to participate without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are free to stop your participation at any point. If you decide to leave the study, please contact the principal investigator Fanny Lauby to inform them of your decision.

**Financial Considerations:** Participation in this study will involve no cost to the subject. For your participation in this study your email address can be separately entered in a **raffle to win an Ipad**. The raffle will take place after the completion of the study, and the winner will be informed by email. For those who choose to be invited for a personal interview, compensation will be given in the form of a \$15 gift card at the end of the interview.

**Confidentiality:** The data obtained from you will be collected via a survey available online and in paper format. The interviews will be recorded if the participant agrees to it and transcribed to text. After the transcription is done the audio recording will be erased. The collected data will be accessible to the principal investigator and the IRB members and staff at the CUNY Graduate Center.

The researcher will protect your confidentiality by **waiving the signed consent form**, which means that your name and other personal identifiers will not be associated with the data collected. Each participant will be given a number and **no personally identifiable information will be stored** with the responses that you give. The collected data will be kept in encrypted files and on separate computers.

**Contact Questions/Persons:** If you have any questions about the research now or in the future, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Fanny Lauby, at [flauby@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:flauby@gc.cuny.edu) or 201.364.3412. If you have any questions concerning your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact Kay Powell at [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu), or by phone at 212.817.7525.

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#### PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT

I have explained the study to \_\_\_\_\_ in language he/she understands, and he/she has agreed to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of  
Person Explaining  
Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Explaining Form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board

Approval Date: November 26, 2013  
Expiration Date: November 25, 2014  
Coordinator Initials: AS

## Appendix 9: Consent form, Spanish version, 2012-2013

### CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

#### Fanny Lauby, CUNY Graduate Center

Departamento de Ciencia Política

### CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

**Título del Proyecto:** Las Leyes sobre la Elegibilidad para la Matricula de Residente del Estado y Pertenecer para Jóvenes Inmigrantes

**Investigador Principal:** Fanny Lauby  
Estudiante de Doctorado, CUNY Graduate Center  
Political Science Department, Room 5200  
365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
flauby@gc.cuny.edu

**Consejero Académico:** John Mollenkopf  
Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Sociology  
CUNY Graduate Center, Center for Urban Research, Room 6202,  
365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu

**Sitio donde la investigación debe ser realizada:** la región metropolitana de Nueva York y del norte de New Jersey

**Propósito:** Usted está invitado a participar en un proyecto de estudio. La investigación es realizada por **Fanny Lauby, un estudiante de doctorado del Graduate Center de CUNY**. El propósito de la investigación es para mejor saber cómo los inmigrantes sienten que son parte de los Estados Unidos y sus actitudes hacia ellos. Los resultados de la investigación pueden demostrar una asociación entre la ley del estado y los niveles de pertenecer para jóvenes inmigrantes quienes tienen la edad de ir a la universidad.

**Procedimiento:** Aproximadamente 200 personas deberían participar en este estudio. Cada persona participará en un cuestionario, y los que aceptan tal vez pueden ser contactados para una entrevista personal. Se anticipa que el tiempo de participación para cada participante será **15 minutos** para los que responden al cuestionario, y otra hora para los que participan en la entrevista.

**Requisitos:** Participantes deben ser jóvenes que tienen entre 18 y 30 años de edad, que viven en los Estados Unidos, y que nacieron en América Latina.

**Riesgo e Incomodidad Posible:** Los riesgos e inquietud asociados con este estudio no son más grandes de los que se encuentran diariamente. Se puede sentir un poco de inquietud y stress. Para minimizar estos riesgos, seremos cautos de coleccionar información de manera anónima y de mantener la confidencialidad de los datos. Ninguna información personal será guardada con las respuestas que usted de. Si usted se siente

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board	
Approval Date:	November 19, 2012
Expiration Date:	November 18, 2013
Coordinator Initials:	KP

incomodo después de esta investigación, debería contactar al investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, o el consejero académico, John Mollenkopf.

**Beneficios:** No hay ningunos beneficios personales por participar en esta investigación. Sin embargo, participar en este estudio puede aumentar su conocimiento general de la incorporación de inmigrantes jóvenes. Se anticipa que la información puede ayudar a la introducción y adopción de leyes publicas que sirven a los inmigrantes.

**Participación Voluntaria:** Su participación en esta investigación es **voluntaria**, y usted puede decidir que no participará sin prejuicio, pena o perdido de sus beneficios. Usted está libre de parar su participación en algún momento. Si usted decide de dejar la investigación, por favor contacte el investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, para informarla de su decisión.

**Consideraciones Fináncales:** Participar en este estudio no tiene ninguno costo para usted. Por su participación usted puede dar una dirección web en un formulario separado para entrar a una rifa y ganar un Ipad. La rifa será realizada después del fin de la investigación, y el ganador será notificado con un correo electrónico. Para los que eligen participar en la entrevista personal, recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de 15 dólares al fin de la entrevista.

**Confidencialidad:** La información que usted da será colectada con un cuestionario web o de papel. La entrevista será registrada solamente si el participante da su acuerdo. Después de la transcripción, la grabación será borrada. Los datos serán accesibles al investigador principal y a los miembros y el personal del Consejo de Investigación Institucional del Graduate Center de CUNY.

El investigador protegerá su confidencialidad con una dispensa de firma del formulario de consentimiento, que significa que su nombre y otros datos personales no serán asociados con los datos colectados. Cada participante tendrá un número y **no información personal será guardada** con las respuestas que usted provee. Los datos colectados serán guardados en un formulario codificado y en una computadora separada.

**Preguntas:** Si usted tiene algunas preguntas sobre la investigación ahora o en el futuro, debería contactar el investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, [flauby@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:flauby@gc.cuny.edu) o 201.364.3412. Si usted tiene algunas preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, puede contactar Kay Powell, [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu), o 212.817.7525.

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#### PERSONA QUE COLECTE EL CONSIMIENTO

He explicado la investigación al participante en un lenguaje que él/ella entiende, y él/ella ha aceptado ser parte de la investigación.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre de la persona  
quien explica el formulario

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de la persona quien explica el formulario

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y firma

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del investigador

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del investigador

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y firma

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board	
Approval Date:	November 19, 2012
Expiration Date:	November 18, 2013
Coordinator Initials:	KP



## Appendix 10: Consent form, Spanish version, 2013-2014

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Fanny Lauby, CUNY Graduate Center**  
 Departamento de Ciencia Política

**CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN PROYECTO DE  
 INVESTIGACIÓN**

**Título del Proyecto:** Las Leyes sobre la Elegibilidad para la Matricula de Residente del Estado y Pertenecer para Jóvenes Inmigrantes

**Investigador Principal:** Fanny Lauby  
 Estudiante de Doctorado, CUNY Graduate Center  
 Political Science Department, Room 5200  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 flauby@gc.cuny.edu

**Consejero Académico:** John Mollenkopf  
 Distinguished Professor, Political Science and Sociology  
 CUNY Graduate Center, Center for Urban Research, Room 6202,  
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016  
 jmollenkopf@gc.cuny.edu

**Sitio donde la investigación debe ser realizada:** la región metropolitana de Nueva York y del norte de New Jersey

**Propósito:** Usted está invitado a participar en un proyecto de estudio. La investigación es realizada por **Fanny Lauby, un estudiante de doctorado del Graduate Center de CUNY**. El propósito de la investigación es para mejor saber cómo los inmigrantes sienten que son parte de los Estados Unidos y sus actitudes hacia ellos. Los resultados de la investigación pueden demostrar una asociación entre la ley del estado y los niveles de pertenecer para jóvenes inmigrantes quienes tienen la edad de ir a la universidad.

**Procedimiento:** Aproximadamente 200 personas deberían participar en este estudio. Cada persona participará en un cuestionario, y los que aceptan tal vez pueden ser contactados para una entrevista personal. Se anticipa que el tiempo de participación para cada participante será **15 minutos** para los que responden al cuestionario, y otra hora para los que participan en la entrevista.

**Requisitos:** Participantes deben ser jóvenes que tienen entre 18 y 30 años de edad, que viven en los Estados Unidos, y que nacieron en América Latina.

**Riesgo e Incomodidad Posible:** Los riesgos e inquietud asociados con este estudio no son más grandes de los que se encuentran diariamente. Se puede sentir un poco de inquietud y stress. Para minimizar estos riesgos, seremos cautos de coleccionar información de manera anónima y de mantener la confidencialidad de los datos. Ninguna información personal será guardada con las respuestas que usted de. Si usted se siente

CUNY UI - Institutional Review Board	
Approval Date:	November 26, 2013
Expiration Date:	November 25, 2014
Coordinator Initials:	AS

incomodo después de esta investigación, debería contactar al investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, o el consejero académico, John Mollenkopf.

**Beneficios:** No hay ningunos beneficios personales por participar en esta investigación. Sin embargo, participar en este estudio puede aumentar su conocimiento general de la incorporación de inmigrantes jóvenes. Se anticipa que la información puede ayudar a la introducción y adopción de leyes publicas que sirven a los inmigrantes.

**Participación Voluntaria:** Su participación en esta investigación es **voluntaria**, y usted puede decidir que no participará sin perjuicio, pena o perdido de sus beneficios. Usted está libre de parar su participación en algún momento. Si usted decide de dejar la investigación, por favor contacte el investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, para informarla de su decisión.

**Consideraciones Finánaciales:** Participar en este estudio no tiene ninguno costo para usted. Por su participación usted puede dar una dirección web en un formulario separado para entrar a una rifa y ganar un Ipad. La rifa será realizada después del fin de la investigación, y el ganador será notificado con un correo electrónico. Para los que eligen participar en la entrevista personal, recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de 15 dólares al fin de la entrevista.

**Confidencialidad:** La información que usted da será colectada con un cuestionario web o de papel. La entrevista será registrada solamente si el participante da su acuerdo. Después de la transcripción, la grabación será borrada. Los datos serán accesibles al investigador principal y a los miembros y el personal del Consejo de Investigación Institucional del Graduate Center de CUNY.

El investigador protegerá su confidencialidad con una dispensa de firma del formulario de consentimiento, que significa que su nombre y otros datos personales no serán asociados con los datos colectados. Cada participante tendrá un número y **no información personal será guardada** con las respuestas que usted provee. Los datos colectados serán guardados en un formulario codificado y en una computadora separada.

**Preguntas:** Si usted tiene algunas preguntas sobre la investigación ahora o en el futuro, debería contactar el investigador principal, Fanny Lauby, [flauby@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:flauby@gc.cuny.edu) o 201.364.3412. Si usted tiene algunas preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en esta investigación, puede contactar Kay Powell, [kpowell@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:kpowell@gc.cuny.edu), o 212.817.7525.

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#### PERSONA QUE COLECTE EL CONSIMIENTO

He explicado la investigación al participante en un lenguaje que él/ella entiende, y él/ella ha aceptado ser parte de la investigación.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre de la persona  
quien explica el formulario

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de la persona quien explica el formulario

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y firma

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre del investigador

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del investigador

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha y firma



## Appendix 11: Survey instrument, English and Spanish

1. Measures of belonging	2. Medidas de pertenecer
<p>Are you a member of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community or neighborhood organization? No = 0, Yes = 1.</li> <li>• A political group?</li> <li>• A union?</li> <li>• A work-related organization?</li> <li>• Are you a regular volunteer for a nonpolitical group?</li> <li>• Aside from weddings and funerals, do you often attend religious services? No = 0, Yes = 1.</li> </ul>	<p>Usted es miembro de:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Una organización de comunidad o de barrio? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Un grupo político?</li> <li>• ¿Un sindicato?</li> <li>• ¿Una organización relacionada con su trabajo?</li> <li>• ¿Usted trabaja a menudo como voluntario para un grupo apolítico?</li> <li>• ¿Aparte de bodas y funerales, usted asiste a la iglesia a menudo? No = 0, Si = 1</li> </ul>
<p>In the last 12 months, have you...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tried to persuade others to vote? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• Displayed campaign button or sign?</li> <li>• Contacted a public official?</li> <li>• Contacted the media?</li> <li>• Tutored others?</li> <li>• Attended a public meeting in which there was a discussion of community affairs?</li> <li>• Taken part in a protest, march, or demonstration?</li> <li>• Signed an e-mail or paper petition?</li> <li>• Worked as a canvasser – having gone door to door for a political or social group or a candidate?</li> </ul>	<p>En los últimos 12 meses, ha usted... No = 0, Si = 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Intentado de convencer a otros para que voten?</li> <li>• ¿Exhibido un botón o una placa de campaña?</li> <li>• ¿Se ha puesto en contacto con un funcionario?</li> <li>• ¿Se ha puesto en contacto con los medios de comunicación?</li> <li>• ¿Dado clases particulares a otros?</li> <li>• ¿Asistido a una reunión pública a donde se discutieron asuntos de la comunidad?</li> <li>• ¿Participado en una protesta, marcha, o manifestación?</li> <li>• ¿Firmado una petición electrónica o de papel?</li> <li>• ¿Trabajado como persona que solicita votos durante una campaña electoral para un grupo político o social, o para un candidato?</li> </ul>
<p>Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement: I feel like I belong ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the US.</li> <li>• In my country of origin.</li> <li>• At work (if applicable).</li> <li>• Where I live.</li> <li>• At school.</li> <li>• In my neighborhood.</li> </ul>	<p>Por favor indique cuanto usted está de acuerdo con cada declaración: "Me parece que pertenezco ..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• En los Estados Unidos."</li> <li>• En mi país de origen."</li> <li>• En el trabajo (si es pertinente)."</li> <li>• A donde vivo."</li> <li>• En la escuela."</li> <li>• En mi barrio."</li> </ul>

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<p>How much do you agree or disagree with each statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basically, people get fair treatment in America, no matter who they are.</li> <li>• In America you have an equal chance no matter where you come from or what race you are.</li> <li>• I believe I can make a difference in my community.</li> <li>• By working with others in the community I can help make things better.</li> </ul>	<p>Por favor indique cuanto usted está de acuerdo con cada declaración:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• En general, todos son tratados justamente en América, sin hacer caso a quienes son.</li> <li>• En América todos tienen oportunidades iguales no obstante de donde son o de que raza son.</li> <li>• Yo creo que puedo cambiar cosas en mi comunidad.</li> <li>• Trabajando con otros en mi comunidad yo puedo ayudar y mejorar las cosas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Self-esteem</b> Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</li> <li>• At times, I think I am no good at all.</li> <li>• I feel that I have a number of good qualities.</li> <li>• I am able to do things as well as most other people.</li> <li>• I feel I do not have much to be proud of.</li> <li>• I certainly feel useless at times.</li> <li>• I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.</li> <li>• I wish I could have more respect for myself.</li> <li>• All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</li> <li>• I take a positive attitude toward myself.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Autoestima</b> Por favor indique cuanto usted está de acuerdo con cada declaración:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• En general, estoy satisfecho con mi mismo.</li> <li>• A veces, pienso que no soy nada de bueno.</li> <li>• Me parece que tengo muchas cualidades buenas.</li> <li>• Puedo hacer cosas tan buenas como casi todo el mundo.</li> <li>• Me parece que no tengo mucho de que puedo enorgullecerme.</li> <li>• A veces de seguro me siento inútil.</li> <li>• Me parece que soy una persona importante, o al menos igual que otros.</li> <li>• Deseo que tuviera más respeto para mi mismo.</li> <li>• Teniendo todo en cuenta, me parece que soy un fracaso.</li> <li>• Tengo una actitud positiva para mi mismo.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Interaction with other groups</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you belong to an ethnic or immigrant organization? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• How often do you get together with people from your country of origin?</li> <li>• How often do you communicate with family members or friends who are still living in your country of origin?</li> <li>• How often do you get together with co-workers after work? (Hardly ever, once or twice a year, once a month, at least once a week)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Participa en una organización étnica o de inmigrantes? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Cada cuanto se reúne con gente de su país de origen?</li> <li>• ¿Cada cuanto se comunica con miembros de su familia o amigos que siguen viviendo en su país de origen?</li> <li>• ¿Cada cuanto se reúne con compañeros del trabajo al fin del día? (Casi nunca, una o dos veces al año, una vez al mes, dos veces al mes, al menos cada semana)</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Interacción con otros grupos</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many people from your country and who are living in the U.S. do you talk to regularly? (Zero, less than five, five, between five and ten, more than ten)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Con cuánta gente de su país de origen y que viven en EEUU les habla usted con frecuencia? (cero, menos que cinco, cinco, entre cinco y diez, más que diez)</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Aproximadamente cuántas <u>personas de su barrio/trabajo</u> tienen el mismo origen racial como usted?</li> <li>• ¿Cuánto son del mismo género?</li> <li>• ¿Cuánto tienen la misma lengua materna?</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos de sus <u>amigos íntimos</u> tienen la misma origen racial como usted?</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos son del mismo género?</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos tienen la misma lengua materna?</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos tienen el mismo estatus de migración? (Ninguno, pocos, algunos, la mayoría, todos)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately how many members of your <u>neighborhood/work</u> have the same racial background as your self?</li> <li>• How many have the same gender?</li> <li>• How many have the same first language?</li> <li>• How many of your <u>close friends</u> have the same racial background as yourself?</li> <li>• How many have the same gender?</li> <li>• How many have the same first language?</li> <li>• How many have the same immigration status? (None, only a few, some of them, most of them, all of them)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Desde que se mudó a los EEUU, cada cuanto ha viajado a su país de origen? (Nunca, un par de veces, una vez al año, varias veces al año)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since you moved to the U.S., how often have you traveled back to your country of origin? (Never, once, a couple of times, once a year, several times a year)</li> </ul>
<p>Por favor indica cada cuanto usted...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ha sentido que fue tratado de manera grosera o sin respeto por causa de su grupo racial o étnico.</li> <li>• Ha sentido acusado o tratado con desconfianza por causa de su grupo racial o étnico.</li> <li>• Ha sentido injuriado, insultado, hostigado por causa de su grupo racial o étnico. (Nunca, una vez, algunas veces, una vez al mes, al menos una vez por semana)</li> </ul>	<p>Indicate how frequently you have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felt treated rudely or disrespectfully because of your racial/ethnic group.</li> <li>• Felt accused or something or treated suspiciously because of your racial/ethnic group.</li> <li>• Felt insulted, called a name, or harassed because of your racial/ethnic group. (Never, one time, a few times, once a month, at least once a week)</li> </ul>
<h3>5. Familia</h3>	
<h3>6. Familia</h3>	
<p>Madre del respondedor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Cuál es el curso máximo que su madre acabó? (1-16)</li> <li>• ¿Su madre vive en los Estados Unidos? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Cuánto bien habla inglés su madre? (1 = ninguno, hasta 4 = bien)</li> <li>• ¿Cuál es la ocupación de su madre?</li> <li>• ¿Su madre se ha hecho ciudadana de los EEUU? No = 0, Si = 1, N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Respondent's mother:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the highest grade completed by your mother? (1-16)</li> <li>• Does your mother live in the United States? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• How well does your mother speak English? (1 = not at all, to 4 = well)</li> <li>• What is your mother's occupation?</li> <li>• Has your mother become a U.S. citizen? No = 0, Yes = 1, N/A</li> </ul>

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<p><u>Respondent's father:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the highest grade completed by your father? (1-16)</li> <li>• Does your father live in the United States? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• How well does your father speak English? (1 = not at all, to 4 = well)</li> <li>• What is your father's occupation?</li> <li>• Has your father become a U.S. citizen? No = 0, Yes = 1, N/A</li> </ul>	<p><u>Padre del respondedor:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Cuál es el curso máximo que su padre acabó? (1-16)</li> <li>• ¿Su padre vive en los Estados Unidos? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Cuánto bien habla inglés su padre? (1 = ninguno, hasta 4 = bien)</li> <li>• ¿Cuál es la ocupación de su padre?</li> <li>• ¿Su padre se ha hecho ciudadano de los EEUU? No = 0, Yes = 1, N/A</li> </ul>
<p><u>Respondent's siblings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many brothers and sisters (including step- or half-brothers and sisters) do you have?</li> <li>• How many of them were born in the U.S.?</li> <li>• Are you the oldest child in your family? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> </ul>	<p><u>Hermanos del respondedor:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Cuántos hermanos y hermanas tiene, incluso hermanastros y medios hermanos?</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos nacieron en los Estados Unidos?</li> <li>• ¿Usted es el hijo más viejo de su familia? No = 0, Si = 1</li> </ul>
<h3>7. Educational experience</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you were growing up, did you ever speak a language other than English at home? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• What language was it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Cuándo se crió, habló una lengua otra que inglés en casa? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Qué lengua fue?</li> </ul>
<p>How well do you... (1 = not at all to 4 = very well)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak this language?</li> <li>• Understand this language?</li> <li>• Read this language?</li> <li>• Write this language?</li> </ul>	<p>Cuanto bueno usted puede... (1 = ninguno hasta 4 = muy bien)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Hablar en esta lengua?</li> <li>• ¿Entender en esta lengua?</li> <li>• ¿Leer en esta lengua?</li> <li>• ¿Escribir en esta lengua?</li> </ul>
<p>How well do you... (1 = not at all to 4 = very well)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak English?</li> <li>• Understand English?</li> <li>• Read English?</li> <li>• Write English?</li> </ul>	<p>Cuanto bueno usted puede... (1 = ninguno hasta 4 = muy bien)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Hablar inglés?</li> <li>• ¿Entender el inglés?</li> <li>• ¿Leer en inglés?</li> <li>• ¿Escribir en inglés?</li> </ul>

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<p><u>In high school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you receive any awards? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• Did you participate in any extracurricular activities? (band, team sports, student council, drama, academic competition, clubs, yearbook, school paper, debate team, etc.)</li> <li>• Did you hold any leadership position? (team captain, band chair, student council president, club officer, editor-in-chief, etc.)</li> <li>• Did you work?</li> <li>• Did you volunteer or did community service?</li> <li>• What was your GPA?</li> </ul>	<p><u>En la escuela secundaria:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Usted recibió algunos premios? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Usted participó en algunas actividades extracurriculares? (orquesta, equipo de deporte, gobierno estudiantil, teatro, competencia académica, clubs, anuario, periódico de escuela, equipo de debate, etc.)</li> <li>• ¿Usted tenía posición de liderazgo? (capitán de equipo, líder de orquesta, presidente de gobierno estudiantil, funcionario de club, jefe de redacción, etc.)</li> <li>• ¿Usted trabajó?</li> <li>• ¿Usted ofreció sus servicios como voluntario o para la comunidad?</li> <li>• ¿Cuál fue su GPA?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you currently enrolled in college?</li> <li>• If yes, do you pay in-state tuition?</li> <li>• What type of institution are you enrolled in? (Vocational training, 2-year institution, 4-year public institution, 4-year private institution, graduate/law school)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Está usted en la universidad?</li> <li>• ¿Si está en la universidad, usted paga matrícula de residente del estado?</li> <li>• ¿A qué tipo de universidad va usted? (formación profesional, universidad de comunidad (dos años), universidad pública, universidad privada, escuela de postgrado o de derecho)</li> </ul>
<p><u>In college (if applicable):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you received any awards? No = 0, Yes = 1</li> <li>• Do/Did you participate in any extracurricular activities? (band, team sports, student council, drama, academic competition, clubs, yearbook, school paper, debate team, study abroad, etc.)</li> <li>• Do/Did you hold any leadership position? (team captain, band chair, student council president, club officer, editor-in-chief, etc.)</li> <li>• Are/Were you enrolled full time?</li> <li>• Are you currently employed? Or were you employed while in college?</li> <li>• Do/Did you volunteer or do community service?</li> <li>• What was/is your GPA?</li> <li>• What is the highest degree you completed?</li> </ul>	<p><u>En la universidad (si es pertinente):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Usted recibió algunos premios? No = 0, Si = 1</li> <li>• ¿Usted participó en algunas actividades extracurriculares? (orquesta, equipo de deporte, ayuntamiento de estudiante, teatro, competencia académica, clubs, anuario del colegio, periódico de escuela, equipo de debate, estudios en el extranjero, etc.)</li> <li>• ¿Usted tiene/tenía posición de liderazgo? (capitán de equipo, líder de orquesta, presidente de gobierno estudiantil, funcionario de club, jefe de redacción, etc.)</li> <li>• ¿Usted es/fue matriculado/a de tiempo completo?</li> <li>• ¿Usted ahora trabaja? ¿Trabajaba cuando fue a la universidad?</li> <li>• ¿Usted ofrece/ofreció sus servicios como voluntario o para la comunidad?</li> <li>• ¿Cuál es/fue su GPA?</li> <li>• ¿Cuál es el título académico más alto que recibió?</li> </ul>

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<p>How far would you like to go in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some college</li> <li>• Graduate from a two-year college with an associate's degree</li> <li>• Graduate from a four-year college with a bachelor's degree</li> <li>• Get a master's degree, teaching certification, social work, business degree</li> <li>• Get a law degree, a Ph.D., or a medical doctor's degree</li> </ul>	<p>¿Cuán lejos quiere llegar en la universidad?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algunos años.</li> <li>• Terminar una universidad de comunidad [2 años] con un título técnico.</li> <li>• Terminar una universidad con una licencia académica.</li> <li>• Recibir una maestría, un certificado de enseñanza, de trabajo social, o de negocios.</li> <li>• Obtener un título de derecho, un doctorado, o un título de médico.</li> </ul>
<p>How far do you think you will go in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some college</li> <li>• Graduate from a two-year college with an associate's degree</li> <li>• Graduate from a four-year college with a bachelor's degree</li> <li>• Get a master's degree, teaching certification, social work, business degree</li> <li>• Get a law degree, a Ph.D., or a medical doctor's degree</li> </ul>	<p>¿Cuán lejos piensa que llegará en la universidad?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algunos años.</li> <li>• Terminar una universidad de comunidad [2 años] con un título técnico.</li> <li>• Terminar una universidad con una licencia académica.</li> <li>• Recibir una maestría, un certificado de enseñanza, de trabajo social, o de negocios.</li> <li>• Obtener un título de derecho, un doctorado, o un título de médico.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Controls</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How old are you?</li> <li>• What is your gender? Female Male</li> <li>• How old were you when you came to live in the United States to live?</li> <li>• How do you describe your race?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¿Cuántos años tiene?</li> <li>• ¿Cuál es su género? Femenino Masculino</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos años tenía cuando se mudó para vivir en los Estados Unidos?</li> <li>• ¿Cómo describe usted su raza?</li> </ul>
<p>Did you hold a visa when you came to the United States? No = 0, Yes = 1</p> <p>If yes, which type of visa was it? (check one)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family-sponsored visa (reunification)</li> <li>• Tourist visa</li> <li>• Work/business visa</li> <li>• Diversity program visa</li> <li>• Exchange visitor (J)</li> </ul>	<p>¿Tenía usted una visa cuando llegó a los Estados Unidos? No = 0, Si = 1</p> <p>¿Si la tenía, que tipo de visa fue? (elige una)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visa de reunificación de familia</li> <li>• Visa de turista</li> <li>• Visa de trabajo/negocios</li> <li>• Visa del programa de diversidad</li> <li>• Visa de estudiante de intercambio (J)</li> </ul>
<p>Which state do you currently live in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey.</li> <li>• New York.</li> <li>• How old were you when you moved to that state?</li> </ul>	<p>¿En cuál estado vive ahora?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Jersey.</li> <li>• New York.</li> <li>• ¿Cuántos años tenía cuando se mudó a este estado?</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 12: Recruitment email, survey invitation

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➡
🔄
📧 Répondre à tous
📧 Transférer
📧 Déplacer
✕ Supprimer
🔒 Fermer

### recruiting participants for research project

Lauby, Fanny

Vous avez transféré ce message le 22/05/2013 18:45.

**Date d'envoi :** mercredi 22 mai 2013 18:40

**A :** [REDACTED]

**Pièces jointes :** [approval letter.pdf \(97 Ko\)](#) [Ouvrir sous forme de page Web]

To the members of [REDACTED],

My name is Fanny Lauby and I am a doctoral candidate in Political Science at the City University of New York Graduate Center. I am emailing you regarding a study I am conducting in the states of New York and New Jersey. I was wondering if it would be okay for me to attend your event on Sunday and advertise the study.

The study uses a survey to compare immigrant youths in New York and New Jersey on various aspects of their educational and civic/political experience. Please find attached the approval notice from the CUNY Graduate Center IRB. I am hoping to establish a connection between state-level policies and the experiences of immigrants in the United States.

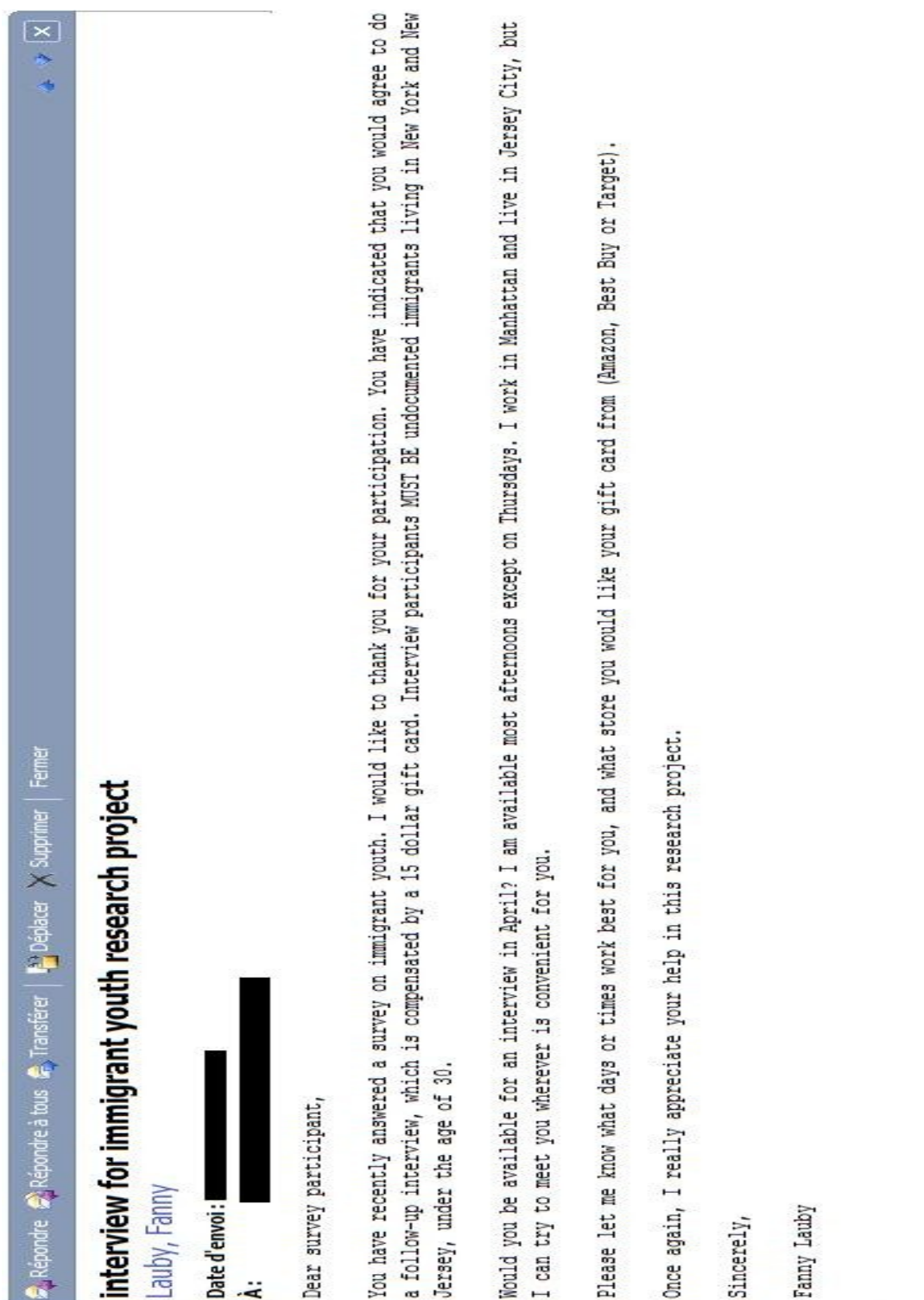
The survey is anonymous, takes about 10 to 15 minutes to fill out, and participants can sign up for a raffle to win an iPad. It is available in Spanish and English. Participants must be between 18 and 30 years old, BORN IN LATIN AMERICA (except Puerto Rico), and residing in New Jersey or New York.

Please let me know if you would be willing to help with the recruitment of participants by allowing me to attend your event, or by sending out the following links to your members. Here are the links to the surveys: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SG7BFKC>, with a Spanish version available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VVHRXZG>.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by email or by phone at 201.364.3412. I really appreciate your help with this project.

Sincerely,  
Fanny Lauby

## Appendix 13: Recruitment email, interview invitation





**Appendix 14: Organizations contacted for recruitment****New York**

Dream Team at Baruch  
Lehman College Dream Team  
Queens College Dream Team  
NYU Dream Team  
Borough of Manhattan Community College  
Baruch Latin American Student Association  
Baruch Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting  
City College Latin American Engineering Student Association  
City College Vision Latina  
York College Latin Caucus  
Queens College La Tertulia Spanish Club  
Queens College Alliance of Latin American Students  
Queensborough CC International Student Club  
Lehman College Cultura  
SUNY Purchase Latinos Unidos  
New Paltz Latin American Student Union  
New Paltz Latino Week  
SUNY New Paltz Dream Team  
New Paltz Latino Cultural Center  
Columbia Chicano Caucus  
Latin American Business Association – Stern Grad  
NYU Latinos Unidos con Honor y Amistad  
NYU Mexico Lindo y Querido  
Fordham Latin American Law Student Association  
SUNY Old Westbury Alianza Latina  
New York State Youth Leadership Council  
Dream Act 2010 – New York  
Brooklyn Immigrant Youth Coalition  
Make The Road – New York  
New York Immigration Coalition  
Mexican American Student Alliance  
Mano a Mano New York  
Asociación Tepeyac de New York  
La Unión  
The Workplace Project Farmingville Committee  
Centro del Inmigrante (Staten Island)  
Hispanic Resource Center of Larchmont & Mamaroneck  
Mixteca Organization, Inc  
New Immigrant Community Empowerment  
Laundry Workers Center

**New Jersey**

Mexican American Progress Movement  
Passaic County Dream Team  
Essex County College Dream Team  
Essex County College Phi Theta Kappa  
L.U.N.A. Rutgers Newark  
Red Hawk Student Union  
Student Government Association of County College of Morris  
Ramapo Student Government Association  
New Jersey City University Student Government Organization  
Monclair State University Student Government Association  
Bergen Community College ESL Department  
Bergen Community College Latin American Student Association  
Bergen Community College Student Government Association  
William Paterson University Student Government Association  
New Brunswick Center for Latino Arts and Culture  
Rutgers University Latino Student Council  
Rutgers University Sociedad Estudiantil Dominicana  
Rutgers University Union of Cuban American Students  
Rutgers University Tuition Equality for Dreamers  
Rutgers University Student Assembly  
Rutgers University Black Voice/Carta Latina  
Rutgers University Women's Center Coalition  
Rutgers University Latin American Womyn's Organization  
New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Rutgers Newark Latinos United Networking in America  
Rutgers Newark Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority  
Rutgers Newark Peruvian American Student Organization  
Rutgers Newark Office of Student Life and Leadership  
Princeton Dream Team  
Saint Peters University Social Justice Club  
New Jersey Dream Act Coalition  
Wind of the Spirit  
Choforitos United  
Tuition Equity for New Jersey Dreamers  
Laundry Workers Center  
IRATE & First Friends  
AFSC Immigrant Rights Program  
La Movida Newark  
Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey  
Dream Act 2010 – New Jersey  
Latin American Service Organization

Appendix 15: Social media recruitment

Home Fanny
Facebook

**Latin American Student Association - LASA - Bergen Community College**

126 members (1 new) · Invite by Email

+ Add People to Group

Write Post
Add Photo / Video
Ask Question
Add File

RECENT POSTS

Hi everyone! I am an international student at CUNY and I am doing a study on Latino immigrant youths living in NJ. If you are under 30 and were born in Latin America, please consider taking this survey! It is anonymous, takes about 10 minutes, and participants can win an iPad! Here are the links to the surveys: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SG7BFKC>, with a Spanish version available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VHRXZG>. Thank you!

**Immigrant Youth Survey**  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)  
 Web survey powered by SurveyMonkey.com. Create your own online survey now with SurveyMonkey's expert certified FREE templates.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 16 hours ago

Seen by 5

Write a comment...

**Suggested Groups**

- Colombianos en el area triestatal...**  
3,674 members  
Join Group
- Bergen Community College Art Club**  
93 members  
Join Group
- UREACHMORE.COM**  
3,765 members  
Join Group
- Rockass Online Music**  
5,979 members  
Join Group
- SALSEANDO in NY**  
6,092 members  
Join Group

Write Post
Add Photo / Video
Ask Question
Add File

RECENT POSTS

Hi everyone! I am an international student at CUNY and I am doing a study on Latino immigrant youths living in NJ. If you are under 30 and were born in Latin America, please consider taking this survey! It is anonymous, takes about 10 minutes, and participants can win an iPad! Here are the links to the surveys: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SG7BFKC>, with a Spanish version available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VHRXZG>. Thank you!

**Immigrant Youth Survey**  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)  
 Web survey powered by SurveyMonkey.com. Create your own online survey now with SurveyMonkey's expert certified FREE templates.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 16 hours ago

Seen by 5

Write a comment...

**FAVORITES**

- News Feed
- Messages
- Events
- Browse

**GROUPS**

- Essex County Dream Team ...
- RUTE: Rutgers University T ...
- Chofortos United
- BDP3 (Bureau des Doctoran...
- Latin American Studen...**
- The Graduate Center Adv...
- ENS Cachan
- Khâgne Michelet
- GC Political Science
- Create Group...

**PAGES**

- Pages Feed 20+
- Like Pages 15
- Create a Page...

**APPS**

- App Center 20+
- Games Feed 20+

### **Appendix 16: Events attended for observation and participant observation**

Constitution Day event at Rutgers Newark, 9/19/12

“Undocumented and Unafraid” event at the Murphy Institute in New York City, 9/27/2012

Student for Immigration Education Reform Inaugural Conference at Macaulay Honors College (CUNY), 9/28/12

Deferred Action Application Assistance Event through CUNY Citizenship Now! at Baruch College in New York City, 9/29/12

New York University Dream Team inauguration event in New York City, 2/19/13

Youth Leadership Council Day of Action in Albany, New York, 3/5/13

New York Dream Act Human Chain at Governor Cuomo’s Office in New York City, 3/19/13

Citizenship Application Assistance Event through CUNY Citizenship Now! at La Guardia Community College, 3/23/13

“Coming out of the shadows” event in Union Square Park, New York City, 3/28/13

CUNY Mexican Institute Conference “Mexico-NY: 30 Years of Migration”, 5/10/13

Week of Action in New Jersey: Wind of the Spirit and SEIU BBQ in Dover, NJ, 5/25/13

Week of Action in New Jersey: Mexican American Progress Movement Immigration Talk in the Mexican American Community Center of Passaic, NJ, 5/26/13

“Support the New York Dream Act” rally at Baruch College, 5/28/13

Essex County College Dream Team inauguration “Coming out” event in Newark, NJ, 5/29/13

Passaic County Dream Team event in Passaic High School, Passaic, NJ, 5/29/13

Essex County College Dream Team strategy meeting in Essex County College, Newark, NJ, 7/2/13

New Jersey Coalition strategy meeting in Rutgers Newark, NJ, 7/7/13

Essex County College Dream Team strategy meeting in Rutgers Newark, NJ, 7/12/13

Essex County College Dream Team strategy meeting in Essex County College, Newark, NJ, 7/25/13

Essex County College Dream Team strategy meeting in Essex County College, Newark, NJ, 8/8/13

New Jersey United Student meeting, New Brunswick, NJ, 8/17/13

New Jersey Tuition Equity Coalition strategy meeting, New Brunswick, NJ, 8/17/13

Essex County College Dream Team “Move Night” event at Essex County College in Newark, NJ, 9/13/13

Information Session on the International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees at Saint Peters University in Jersey City, NJ, 9/14/13

Essex County College Dream Team strategy meeting in Newark, NJ, 9/19/13

“Own the DREAM” Information Session on Deferred Action at Saint Peters University, Jersey City, NJ, 12/7/13

## **Appendix 17: Interview protocol**

### **Background information**

How old were you when you came to the U.S.? Were you happy about the move ?

Did you go to school in your country of origin? What grade did you start when you moved to the U.S.? Are you happy with the education you had in the US? Did you get along with your teachers? Guidance counselors? Were any of them aware of your status? Why or why not? Were you involved in any clubs in school?

Did you have any responsibility at home when you were in high school? Are you the oldest child in your family? Are any of your siblings born in the US? Were there ever any issues due to the fact that they were born here and you were born abroad?

### **Belonging**

Have you ever gone back to your country of origin? What do you consider your home? The US or country of origin? Where do you think you will be living in five years? What do you think you will be doing?

How would you describe the area where you and your family settled?

How would you describe your neighborhood: Urban/rural area? Do other immigrants live there? What groups have settled in and out of your neighborhood in the last 10-20 years? Where are they from?

Were there any services provided to immigrant families? Did your family use them?

Do you know who the elected officials for this town/area/state are? Do you know if any of them are immigrants?

### **Transition to college/work**

How did you come to decide to apply for college? Did anybody help you with the application? How did you pick the institution you attend/attended? Did you know anyone who went there?

Do/did you pay in-state tuition/scholarship? Do/did you work? Does/did your college provide aid to undocumented students?

Are/Were you involved in any clubs at this institution?

What type of work do you do? How did you find this job?

Could you describe the people you work with? Are they immigrants too? If so, where are they from? Do you socialize with your co-workers? What do you talk about with them?

### **Immigration status**

If you don't mind my asking, were you always aware of your immigration status? Did you always know what it meant to be undocumented? Can you tell me what happened when you found out/realized what it meant?

### **Mobilization**

Do you volunteer/tutor? Are there any local/community organizations in your neighborhood/school/church? Are you a member in any of these? How did you become a member? Do you know anyone involved in them? Have you ever participated in a protest or demonstration?

Do these organizations focus on undocumented immigrants or are they more general? What type of issues do you think they should focus on? What type of service do they provide? What activities do they propose?

To they reach out to other groups outside of a specific nationality/neighborhood/school?

Do they use new technologies like the internet and social media? What *resources* would you say are crucial to these organizations? Do they usually have them? Do they receive support from elected officials or from their local government? Do you think elected officials can be trusted?

Do you think immigrant youths should be politically engaged? Why or why not?

Do you think government can be of assistance to unauthorized immigrants? How so?

Do you keep up with politics in your country of origin? Through what means? What are your general feelings about the political system in the United States?

Did you pay any attention to the 2012 presidential campaign? Why or why not?

### **Perception of state/local laws**

What do you know about in-state tuition for undocumented students in your state? How do you know it?

Are you familiar with any local or state law which affects immigrants? What do you think of legislation modeled after Arizona's SB1070? Do you think the reception of immigrants in your state has shaped your level of involvement?

### **Perception of immigration reform**

Are you familiar with the DREAM Act? Did you apply deferred action applications? How did you apply? How did you pay the fees?

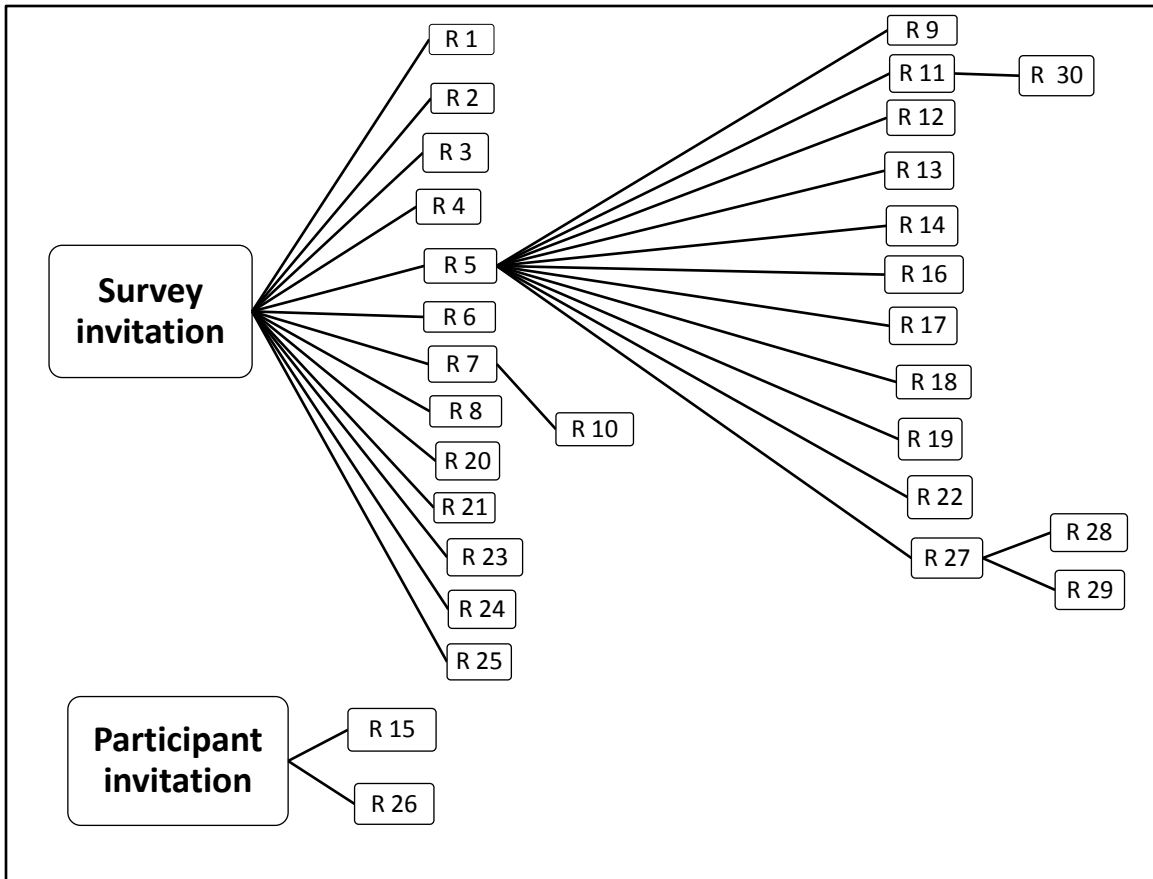
Are you involved in the Dreamers' movement? Why or why not? Why do you think some people get involved and others don't? Do you know the leaders in the movement? Do you identify with them?

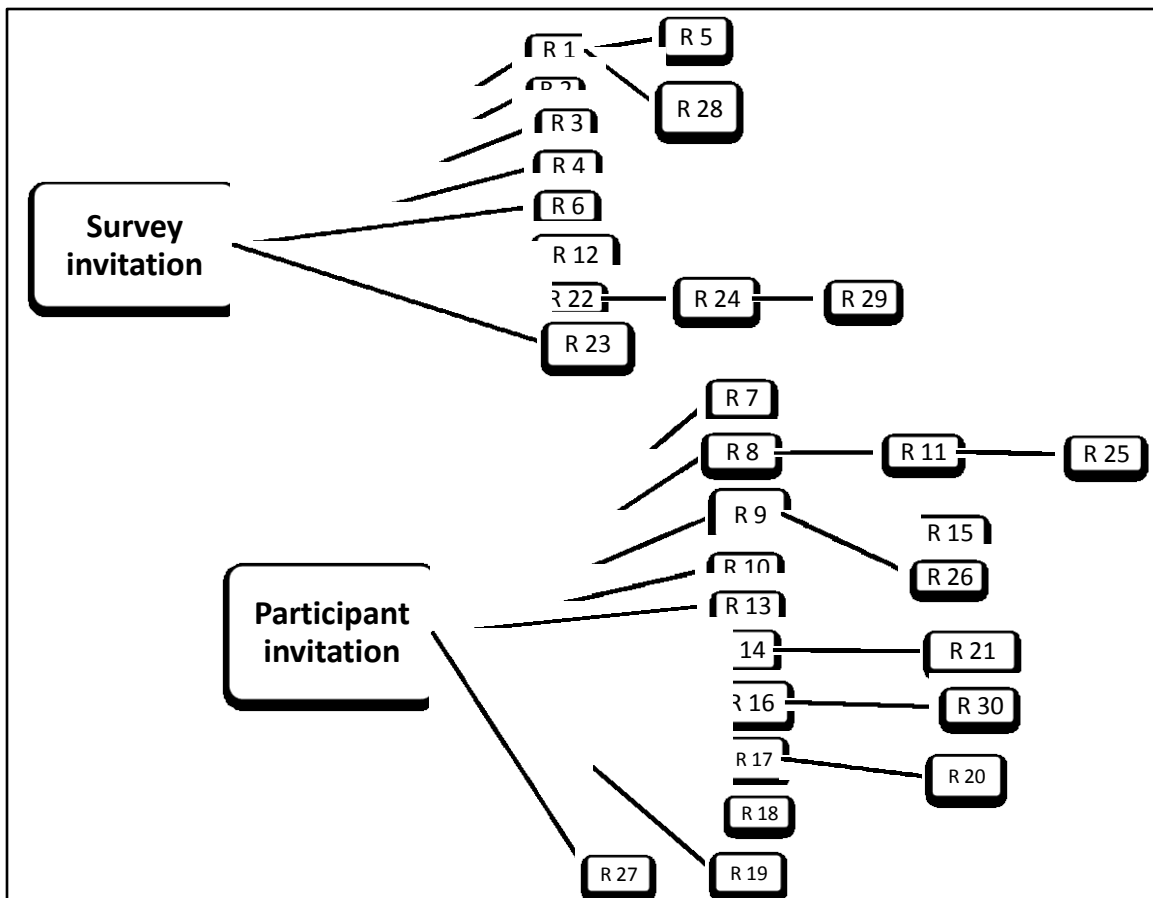
Are there differences among members of the movement on the goals to be achieved? Have some of the goals changed over the years? Are there things that bring the members together?

How do you think the general public perceives immigrants? How do they view undocumented youths/students? Do they support their claims? Do you think most people are aware of the difficulties unauthorized immigrants face?



**Appendix 18: Displaying the recruitment of interview participants, New York**



**Appendix 19: Displaying the recruitment of interview participants, New Jersey**

Appendix 20: Chart of interviewee characteristics

Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age	Age at arrival	Occupation	Civic/Political involvement	Family status	Status
<b>NEW YORK RESPONDENTS</b>								
Antonio	M	Mexico	27	15	In college, used to work.	Involved with church.	Mixed status	Residency petition.
Dario	M	Mexico	22	4	Student	Involved with brother's school.	Mixed status	DACA
Alejandro	M	Mexico	25	4	Worked, now in college.	Used to be involved in WALK (Tepeyac).	Mixed status	DACA
Roman	M	Mexico	23	3	Works, in college part-time	None, used to be in a gang.	Undocumented	DACA pending
Cecilia	F	Mexico	18	11	Student	None	Undocumented	Residency petition
Joel	M	Mexico	19	5	Student	None, just college clubs.	Mixed status	DACA
Dora	F	Dominican Republic	19	12	Student, works.	None	Undocumented	DACA
Rosario	F	Mexico	25	3	Works, graduated college	Used to be very involved with DREAM activists.	Mixed status	DACA pending
Juan	M	Mexico	18	10	Student, works.	Very involved in community and with DREAM Act.	Undocumented	DACA pending
Guadalupe	F	Mexico	26	14	Works	Community involved (arts)	Mixed status	DACA pending
Alicia	F	Mexico	19	7	Works, in college part-time.	Occasional community involvement, not DREAM Act.	Mixed status	DACA
Gael	M	Honduras	19	8	Works and in college.	Used to be involved in high school, but not anymore.	Mixed status	DACA
Leticia	F	Mexico	19	11	Works full time, in college.	Involved in high school.	Mixed status	DACA
Cesar	M	Mexico	22	17	Works full time.	Used to be involved with Tepeyac.	Undocumented	DACA ineligible
Juana	F	Colombia	22	3	Part-time student, works.	Very involved on DREAM Act.	Mixed status	U visa pending.

Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age	Age at arrival	Occupation	Civic/Political involvement	Family status	Status
Beatriz	F	El Salvador	21	12	In college full time, works.	No, used to be involved at church.	Mixed status	DACA
Jose	M	Honduras	19	14	Works, about to start college.	Involved with DREAM activists.	Undocumented	DACA ineligible
Miranda	F	Mexico	24	13	Works part-time and in college.	Used to be involved in high school on DREAM Act, but no more activity.	Mixed status	Marrying U.S. citizen
Santiago	M	Mexico	27	16	Works full time.	Used to volunteer at Tepeyac.	Undocumented	Not eligible
Roberto	M	Colombia	22	4	Works, part-time graduate school.	Involved on Dream Act in high school, but nothing now.	Mixed status	DACA
Patricia	F	Colombia	20	8	Full time student	Very involved on DREAM Act.	Undocumented	DACA pending
Rafael	M	Mexico	28	14	Works full time, in art school.	Used to be in WALK-Tepeyac, now goes to some meetings.	Undocumented	No DACA
Silvia	F	Ecuador	23	4	Works full time, in college.	Very involved, leader of a CUNY dream team.	Mixed status	DACA
Ana	F	Peru	22	10	Works full time, in college.	None.	Mixed status	Residency petition...
Yanely	F	Mexico	19	2	Works, in college full time.	Involved in the DREAM Act.	Mixed status	DACA
Miguel	M	Ecuador	29	15	Works full time, graduated college.	Community involvement, attends some DREAM events.	Undocumented	DACA
Lucia	F	Mexico	25	12	Works, athlete training.	Volunteered at Tepeyac for a while.	Mixed status	DACA pending
Ruben	M	Mexico	20	4	Works full time, in college.	None.	Mixed status	DACA
Sandro	M	Mexico	20	6	Works full time, part-time student.	Volunteered in church and Tepeyac in high school.	Mixed status	DACA
Adrian	M	Mexico	24	6	Works full time, graduated.	None.	Mixed status	DACA

Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age	Age at arrival	Occupation	Civic/Political involvement	Family status	Status
<b>NEW JERSEY RESPONDENTS</b>								
Claudia	F	Mexico	26	6	Works part-time, graduated college.	Used to be very involved, now moving away.	Mixed status	Residency pending
Alvaro	M	Dominican Republic	20	10	Graduated, looking to transfer to 4-year.	Involved with tuition equity campaign.	Mixed status	DACA
Laura	F	Ecuador	21	8	In college in NY.	Was involved with NJDAC.	Undocumented	DACA
Sara	F	Brazil	20	11	Full time student.	Very involved with DREAM Act and tuition equity.	Undocumented	DACA
Graciela	F	Peru	23	13	Works, full time student.	Involved with DREAM Act campaign.	Mixed status	Residency pending.
Jorge	M	Mexico	24	12	Works full time, on leave from school.	None.	Undocumented	DACA pending
Cristina	F	Mexico	24	11	Works, graduated community college.	Was involved with NJDAC, but not anymore.	Undocumented	DACA pending
Ernesto	M	Costa Rica	23	12	Works, in county college part-time.	Not involved.	Undocumented	DACA
Omar	M	Peru	23	6	Works full time, part-time student.	Very involved with DREAM Act and tuition equity.	Mixed status	DACA
Inez	F	Ecuador	20	6	In county college, works.	Recently involved with tuition equity movement.	Undocumented	Residency pending
Raul	M	Ecuador	21	>1	In community college.	None.	Mixed status	DACA
Alejandra	F	Mexico	19	5	Works 2 jobs, in college.	Involved in high school, and now on tuition equity.	Mixed status	DACA
Giuliana	F	Mexico	19	6	Works, in college.	Involved in high school, now in college as well.	Mixed status	DACA



Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age	Age at arrival	Occupation	Civic/Political involvement	Family status	Status
Leandra	F	Mexico	22	9	Works and in grad school in NY.	Involved with tuition equality campaign.	Mixed status	DACA
Marta	F	Costa Rica	21	9	In county college, works.	None.	Undocumented	DACA
Ivan	M	Ecuador	27	14	Works, graduated college.	Not involved because of time constraints, but pays attention on.	Undocumented	Residency pending
Alba	F	Peru	21	10	Works, in college.	Involved in tuition equity campaign.	Undocumented	DACA
Elias	M	Mexico	19	7	Works, back in college after leave.	Involved with tuition equity campaign.	Mixed status	DACA
Enrique	M	Ecuador	21	16	Works, graduated county college.	Recently involved in tuition equity, not much time for it.	Mixed status	DACA ineligible
Hugo	M	Ecuador	19	13	Works full time, in community college.	Recently involved with tuition equity, but works.	Mixed status	DACA ineligible
Jesus	M	Venezuela	20	3	Works, in community college.	Not involved, but recent member in college Dream Team.	Undocumented	DACA
Carla	F	Honduras	18	11	About to start college, babysits.	Community involvement at church.	Undocumented	DACA
Luis	M	Peru	20	7	In college full time.	Involved in school club, but little on tuition equity.	Undocumented	DACA
Andrea	F	Mexico	26	1	Graduated, in law school.	Very involved on Dream Act and Tuition Equity.	Mixed status	DACA pending
Adriana	F	Uruguay	20	8	Works 2 jobs, in county college.	Not involved because of work.	Undocumented	DACA
Javier	M	Ecuador	25	13	Works, in college after 2-year leave.	Not involved anymore.	Undocumented	Residency pending

Name	Gender	Country of origin	Age	Age at arrival	Occupation	Civic/Political involvement	Family status	Status
Virgilio	M	Peru	20	7	In college full time.	Not involved, thinks about creating a college club.	Undocumented	DACA
Elsa	F	Mexico	23	9	Works, graduated county college.	Involved on the Tuition Equity campaign.	Mixed status	DACA
Ofelia	F	Mexico	18	3	Works, about to start county college.	Involved in high school Dream Team.	Mixed status	DACA
Pablo	M	Peru	19	4	Full time student, works in summer.	None.	Mixed status	DACA

## Appendix 21: Qualitative analyses codes, by families

### Family

Comparing with peer/sibling experience  
 Experience with court system  
 Experience with other states  
 Experience with police  
 Family isolation/separation  
 Family visits to/from country of origin  
 Health care access

Lack of parental support for involvement  
 Mixed status family  
 Parent isolation  
 Parent moved before  
 Parental involvement  
 Parental support for activism  
 Responsibilities at home

### Civic and political engagement

Activity because of sibling/friend  
 Benefits of involvement  
 Church activities  
 Community organization/services  
 Conflict between/within groups  
 Diversity within organization  
 Efficacy issues  
 Future plans to be involved  
 Interest in other policies  
 Involvement because of policy introduction  
 Knowledge of state policies  
 Lack of support from politician  
 Motivation because of status  
 Negative view of government  
 Network building

No activity because of fear  
 No involvement because of time  
 No political knowledge  
 No trust in politicians  
 Online personal research/resources  
 Political activities  
 Politics in country of origin  
 Positive view of government/politicians  
 Positive view of grassroots activism  
 Positive view of home state  
 Raising awareness  
 Strategy discussion  
 Support from politicians  
 Transportation issues  
 Women involvement

### DACA

Change in job/abilities after DACA  
 Different DACA experience within family/peers

Help with DACA/application  
 Paying for DACA/application

### Immigration reform

Deservedness in immigration reform  
 Different treatment of parents/other groups  
 Disappointment because policy failure/limit  
 Economic argument

Fairness rhetoric  
 Focus on immigration policy  
 Individual success  
 Spanish language media

### Belonging

9/11 experience  
 Depression/fear because of precarious status  
 Did not want/know about move  
 Home = US

Home as difficult concept  
 Identification with other immigrants/dreamers  
 Immigrants in neighborhood  
 Investigator



Latino immigrants in neighborhood  
 Less opportunities due to status  
 Low-income, risky neighborhood  
 Meaning of undocumented  
 Negative perception of immigrants  
 No memory of move  
 Not open about status  
 Open about status  
 Plans to legalize

### **Education**

Campus activities  
 Community college vs. university  
 Comparing with peer/sibling experience  
 Depression from lack of access to college  
 Dissatisfied with educational system  
 Distance from authority  
 ESL classes  
 Graduate school/transfer plans  
 Help from school staff

### **Organizations**

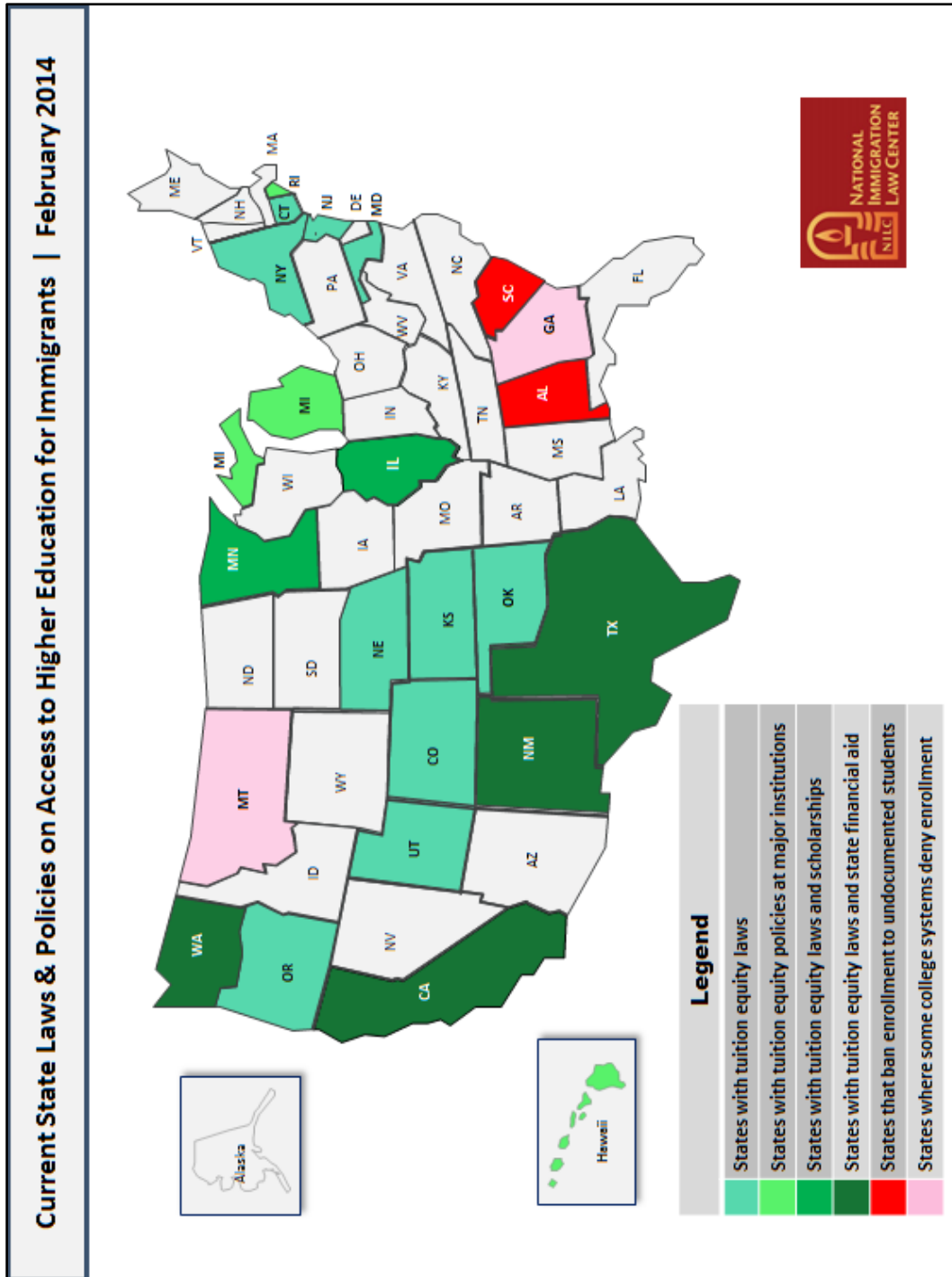
Anakbayan  
 Aspira  
 ATLAS DIY  
 Brooklyn Immigrant Youth Coalition  
 Choforitos United  
 Coalition of Mexican Americans  
 CUNY dream teams  
 ECC Dream Team  
 La Union NY  
 Lions  
 Make the Road NY  
 Mexican American Progress Movement  
 Mixteca NY  
 NIYA

Plans to move out of state  
 Racism/Discrimination  
 Services not offered/not used  
 Sharing with (undocumented) friends  
 Suburban environment  
 Thoughts of moving back to country of origin  
 Work experience  
 Work with/as immigrants

High school dream teams  
 High school involvement  
 No attempt to contact school staff  
 No help from guidance counselor  
 Part-time college/school attendance  
 Positive reaction to scholarship  
 School communication  
 School decision based on finance  
 Support from school/campus

NJDAC  
 NJUS  
 NY Immigration Coalition  
 Passaic County Dream Team  
 PICO  
 Project Adelante  
 RUTE  
 Tepeyac  
 United We Dream  
 USSA  
 WALK  
 Wind of the Spirit  
 YLC

## Appendix 22: Map of State Laws on Access to Public Institution of Higher Education for Undocumented Students



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